

THE POETICAL WORKS
OF
JOHN MILTON





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EDITED
WITH MEMOIR, INTRODUCTIONS, NOTES, AND
AN ESSAY ON MILTON'S ENGLISH
AND VERSIFICATION

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PARADISE LOST, PARADISE REGAINED, SAMSON AGONISTES



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PARADISE LOST

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INTRODUCTION TO PARADISE LOST:

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL AND EXPOSITORY.

SECTION I. FIRST AND SUBSEQUENT EDITIONS OF THE POEM.

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SECTION III. SCHEME AND MEANING OF THE POEM.

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INTRODUCTION

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL AND EXPOSITORY

SECTION I

FIRST AND SUBSEQUENT EDITIONS OF THE POEM

It was possibly just before the Great Fire of London in September 1666, and it certainly cannot have been very long after that event, when Milton, then residing in Artillery Walk, Bunhill Fields, had the manuscript of his *Paradise Lost* ready to receive the official licence necessary for its publication. The duty of licensing such books was then vested by law in the Archbishop of Canterbury, who performed it through his chaplains. The Archbishop of Canterbury at that time (1663—1677) was Dr. Gilbert Sheldon; and the chaplain to whom it fell to examine the manuscript of *Paradise Lost* was the Rev. Thomas Tomkyns, M.A. of Oxford, then incumbent of St. Mary Aldermary, London, and afterwards Rector of Lambeth, Chancellor of the Cathedral Church of Exeter, and D.D. He was the Archbishop's domestic chaplain, and a great favourite of his, and, though but a young man, was already the author of one or two books or pamphlets. The nature of his opinions may be guessed from the fact that his first publication, printed in the year of the Restoration, had been entitled "The Rebel's Plea Examined; or, Mr. Baxter's Judgment concerning the Late War." A subsequent publication of his, penned not long after he had examined *Paradise Lost*, was entitled "The Inconveniencies of Toleration"; and, when he died in 1675, still young, he was described on his tombstone as having been "*Ecclesię Anglicanę contra Schismaticos assertor eximius.*"¹ A

¹ Wood's *Athenę*, by Bliss, iii. 1046—1048.

manuscript by a man of Milton's political and ecclesiastical antecedents could hardly, one would think, have fallen into the hands of a more unpropitious examiner. It is accordingly stated¹ that Tomkyns hesitated about giving the licence, and took exception to some passages in the poem,—particularly to that (Book I. lines 594—599) where it is said of Satan, in his diminished brightness after his fall, that he still appeared

“as when the Sun, new-risen,
Looks through the horizontal misty air
Shorn of his beams, or from behind a cloud,
In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds
On half the nations, and with fear of change
Peoples monarchs.”

At length, however, Mr. Tomkyns was satisfied. There still exists the first book of the actual manuscript which had been submitted to him.² It is a fairly-written copy, in a light, not inelegant, but rather characterless hand of the period,—of course, not that of Milton himself, who had been for fourteen years totally blind. It consists of eighteen leaves of small quarto, stitched together; and on the inside of the first leaf, or cover, is the following official licence to print in Tomkyns's hand:

Imprimatur :

THO. TOMKYNs, *Rmo. in Christo Patri ac Domino, Dno. Gilberto, divina Providentiâ Archiepiscopo Cantuariensi, à sacris domesticis.*

The other books of the manuscript having received a similar certificate, or this certificate on the MS. of the first book sufficing for all, the copy was ready for publication by any printer or bookseller to whom Milton might consign it. Having already had many

¹ Toland's *Life of Milton*, prefixed to Edition of Milton's *Prose Works*, 1698; pp. 40, 41.

² The manuscript is described, and a facsimile of a portion of it is given, in Mr. Samuel Leigh Sotheby's *Rambles in Elucidation of the Autograph of Milton*, 1861; pp. 196, 197. It was then in the possession of William Baker, Esq., of Bayfordsbury, Hertfordshire, to whom it had descended, with other relics of interest, in consequence of the marriage of an ancestor with Mary, the eldest daughter of the *second* Jacob Tonson, of the famous publishing family of the Tonsons. Bishop Newton, in his *Life of Milton*, 1749, mentions the manuscript as then in possession of the *third* Jacob Tonson, who was brother of the said Mary. How it came to be in the Tonson family at all will appear in the course of this Introduction.

dealings with London printers and booksellers, Milton may have had several to whom he could go; but the one whom he favoured in this case, or who favoured him, was Samuel Simmons, having his shop "next door to the Golden Lion in Aldersgate Street."¹ The date of the transaction between Simmons and Milton is April 27, 1667. On that day an agreement was signed between them as follows:—

THESE PRESENTS, made the 27th day of Aprill, 1667, between John Milton, gent., of the one parte, and Samuel Symons, printer, of the other parte, Wittness That the said John Milton, in consideration of five pounds to him now paid by the said Sam^l. Symons, and other the considerations herein mentioned, Hath given, granted, and assigned, and by these presents doth give, grant, and assigne, unto the said Sam^l. Symons, his executors and assignes, All that Booke, Copy, or Manuscript, of a Poem intituled Paradise Lost, or by whatsoever other title or name the same is or shalbe called or distinguished, now lately Licensed to be printed, Together with the full benefitt, profit, and advantage thereof, or which shall or may arise thereby: And the said John Milton, for him, his executors and administrators, doth covenant with the said Sam^l. Symons, his executors and assignes, That hee and they shall at all tymes hereafter have, hold, and enjoy the same and all Impressions thereof accordingly, without the lett or hinderance of him the said John Milton, his executors or assignes, or any person or persons by his or their consent or pivitye, And that he the said Jo: Milton, his executors or administrators, or any other by his or their meanes or consent, shall not print or cause to be printed, or sell, dispose, or publish the said Booke or Manuscript, or any other Booke or Manuscript of the same tenor or subject, without the consent of the said Sam^l. Symons, his executors or assignes: In Consideration whereof the said Sam^l. Symons, for him, his executors and administrators, doth covenant with the said John Milton, his executors and assignes, well and truly to pay unto the said John Milton, his executors and administrators, the sum of five pounds of lawfull English money at the end of the first Impression which he the said Sam^l. Symons, his executors or assignes, shall make and publish of the said Copy or manuscript; Which Impression shalbe accounted to be ended when thirteene hundred Books of the said whole Copy or Manuscript imprinted shalbe sold and retailed off to particuler reading Customers: And shall also pay other five pounds unto the said Mr. Milton, or his assignes, at the end of the second Impression, to be accounted as aforesaid, And five pounds more at the end of the third

¹ He was probably the son, or other near relative, and successor, of Matthew Simmons, printer, who had occupied the same premises, and had printed one of Milton's *Divorce Treatises* in 1644, and his *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, his *Observations on Ormond's Peace with the Irish*, and his *Eikonoklastes*, all in 1649. Milton had resided for a good many years,—viz. from 1640 to 1648, and again from 1661 to 1664,—in Aldersgate Street or its vicinity; and he probably knew the "Golden Lion" and Simmons's shop well. There is still, or was lately, a "Golden Lion Court" in Aldersgate Street, with one or two houses near it that have stood since Milton's time.

Impression, to be in like manner accounted: And that the said three first Impressions shall not exceed fiftene hundred Books or volumes of the said whole Copy or Manuscript a-piece: And further That he the said Samuel Symons and his executors, administrators, and assignes shalbe ready to make Oath before a Master in Chancery concerning his or their knowledge and beleife of or concerning the truth of the disposing and selling the said Books by Retail, as aforesaid, whereby the said Mr. Milton is to be intitled to his said money, from time to time, upon every reasonable request in that behalfe, Or, in default thereof, shall pay the said five pounds agreed to be paid upon each Impression, as aforesaid, as if the same were due, and for and in lieu thereof. In Witness whereof the said parties have to this writing Indented Interchangeably sett their hands and seales the day and yeare first above-written.

John Milton



Sealed and delivered in the
presence of us,

John Fisher,

Beniamin Greene, serv^t to Mr. Milton.¹

¹ The above is a copy of the celebrated original document now in the British Museum,—which document is the one that went into Simmons's keeping at the time of the transaction, while its counterpart, bearing Simmons's signature, went, of course, into Milton's keeping. The relic was presented to the Museum in 1852 by Samuel Rogers, the poet, in whose possession it had been from 1831, one of the most valued curiosities in his house in St. James's Place. Rogers had purchased it for a hundred guineas from Mr. Pickering, the publisher; into whose hands it had come for the second time, through intermediate dealers, after it had been in the collection of Sir Thomas Lawrence, who died in 1830, and to whom Mr. Pickering had originally sold it for £60. Mr. Pickering himself had first acquired it, in February 1826, for £45:3s., at a sale of manuscripts, the property of Mr. Septimus Prowett, a London bookseller, and the publisher of an expensive edition of *Paradise Lost*, with plates after designs by Martin. Mr. Prowett had purchased the document, along with others, in 1824, for the sum of £25 in all, from a tailor in Clifford Street, Bond Street, whose account of them was that they had been left in his house by a lodger, who had decamped in his debt. There the history ends,—save that Bishop Newton, in his *Life of Milton* in 1749, distinctly speaks of the contract with Simmons for *Paradise Lost* as being then, together with the manuscript of the *First Book* of the poem, in the possession of "Mr. Tonson, the bookseller," i.e. the third Jacob Tonson. This Tonson died in 1767; and the question is, How came the contract with Simmons to be lost sight of till 1824, and then to reappear in a tailor's hands in Clifford Street? Why did it not descend, along with the manu-

For practical purposes, it will be observed, the substance of the transaction is that Milton received Five Pounds down on handing over the licensed manuscript to Simmons, and was promised a second Five Pounds when the first edition should have been sold, a third Five Pounds when the second edition should have been sold, and a fourth Five Pounds when the third edition should have been sold,—the measure of each edition to be 1300 copies actually sold, and Simmons's oath to be taken, if necessary, to prove the sale. But, in

script of the First Book and other relics, in the family of the Bakers of Bayfordsbury, Herts, representatives of the Tonsons by intermarriage (see note, *ante*, p. 6)? The answer to this is not very clear; but it seems that a collection of papers, consisting of the business-correspondence of the Tonsons, etc., was left, at the death of Jacob Tonson *tertius* in 1767, in the house in the Strand last occupied by him (lately No. 345, near Catherine Street),—which house was also a banking establishment, known as Mr. Hodsoll's, but in which Tonson had been a partner. Continuing to lie here, neglected and with no proper owner, the papers would naturally become the prey of unscrupulous clerks, or others that might take a fancy to them; and hence, while some of the "Tonson Papers" were kept in the right hands, others were dispersed and got into the market. Meanwhile, the uncertainty of the history of the document from 1767 to 1824 must not be allowed to shake belief in its genuineness. There is not the least doubt that it is the actual document assented to by Milton on the 27th of April 1667.—But another question suggests itself. Is the signature "John Milton," attached to the document, Milton's *autograph*? The poet Rogers never doubted this when he exhibited the document to his guests; many of those who look at the document now in the British Museum never doubt it; it is the natural belief in the circumstances. As long ago as 1861, however, the late Mr. S. Leigh Sotheby, in his *Ramblings in Elucidation of the Autograph of Milton*,—to which we are indebted for some of the foregoing facts in the history of the document,—gave reasons for questioning this belief, and for inclining to the opinion that the signature was not written by Milton's own hand, but only in his presence and by his authority. Even then, this opinion could not fail to recommend itself at once to all who were sufficiently acquainted with undoubted specimens of Milton's handwriting. The signature to the Simmons document differs decidedly from his well-known signature before his blindness, of which there are specimens as late as 1651; nor does it look like any possible modification of that signature induced by blindness. It is entirely unlike the writing of a blind man; and, though it might seem plausible to argue that in a legal document, sealed and witnessed, the signature must have been Milton's own, his blindness notwithstanding, there is ample reply to that argument in the fact that there are other documents of quite as formal a nature, executed in Milton's name after his blindness, and bearing his signatures, — which signatures are certainly not in his own hand, and are certainly also totally unlike this one. All this was urged many years ago; and, if there was still some hesitation on the subject, it was from a desire not to be too sure in

order, as we suppose, to allow a margin for presentation copies, it is provided that, while in the account between Milton and Simmons each of the three first impressions is to be reckoned at 1300 copies, in the actual printing of each Simmons may go as high as 1500 copies.

It has been inferred from the wording of this document that Milton, before his bargain with Simmons, had begun the printing of the poem at his own expense. There seems no real ground, however, for thinking so, or that what was handed over to Simmons was

such an interesting case so long as there could be a shadow of doubt. No need for such hesitation any longer. One indubitable specimen of Milton's actual signature with his own hand after his blindness was total has been recovered,—his signature to his declaration in February 1662-3 of his intended marriage with his third wife; and the reader has only to refer to our facsimile of that signature, given *ante* at p. 73 of vol. i., to see that it is utterly impossible that the blind man who wrote *that* could have written *this* of the Simmons document four years later. In short, the signature to the contract with Simmons for the publication of *Paradise Lost* is but one of not a few extant specimens of Milton's *vicarious* signature to documents executed for him and by his authority after his blindness; and all that can be said for it is that he must have touched the annexed seal with his finger-tip in the presence of the attesting witnesses.—— That annexed seal deserves a word. The device on the shield is the “argent spread eagle, with two heads gules, legged and beaked sable,” which the poet derived from his father as the family-arms, and which, as Anthony Wood tells us (*Fasti*, i. 480, note), the poet “did use and seal his letters with.” There are other Milton documents extant bearing the same seal. This seal, most frequently used by Milton, seems to have descended to his widow after his death, and to have been one of a few silver articles,—“2 tea-spoons, and one silver spoon, with a seal and stopper and bits of silver,”—which were jointly valued at 12s. 6d. in an inventory of the old lady's goods after her death at Nantwich, Cheshire, in 1727. Whether it is still in existence we do not know. But there was *another* silver seal in the poet's possession, differing from the present in having not only the shield with the spread eagle upon it, but also the surmounting family crest: viz. “out of a wreath, a lion's gamb couped and erect azure, grasping an eagle's head erased gules.” This more elaborate seal, less frequently used by Milton, descended to his youngest daughter, Deborah, wife of Abraham Clarke of Spitalfields, and from her to her daughter Elizabeth Clarke, who married Thomas Foster of Holloway. On Thomas Foster's death, it was acquired by Mr. John Payne, bookseller; who sold it, in 1761, for three guineas, to Mr. Thomas Hollis, the well-known virtuoso and enthusiast in Milton. It was recently, with other relics from Mr. Hollis's collection, in the possession of Edgar Disney, Esq., of the Hyde, Ingatestone, Essex, son of the John Disney, Esq., F.S.A., who inherited the Hollis property. There is an engraving of it in the *Milton Papers* of Mr. John Fitchett Marsh, edited for the Chetham Society, 1851 (p. 21).

anything else than the fairly-copied manuscript which had received the *imprimatur* of Mr. Tomkyns. With that *imprimatur*, Simmons might proceed safely in printing the book and bringing it into the market. Accordingly, on the 20th of August 1667, or four months after the foregoing agreement, we find this entry in the books of Stationers' Hall:—

August 20, 1667: Mr. Sam. Symons entered for his copie, under the hands of Mr. Thomas Tomkyns and Mr. Warden Royston, a Booke or Copie Intituled *Paradise Lost*, a Poem in Tenne bookes, by J. M. 6d.

The "Mr. Warden Royston," who is here joined with Mr. Tomkyns as authorising the entry, was Richard Royston, a well-known bookseller of the period, and one of the wardens of the Stationers' Company for 1667. By the rules of the book-trade, the signature of one of the wardens of the year was required, as well as that of the official licenser, to authorise the registration of a book; and, accordingly, underneath Tomkyns's *imprimatur* on the manuscript of the First Book, mentioned as still existing at Bayfordsbury, Herts, we find the name "Richard Royston," together with these words in another hand: "*Int. per Geo. Tokefeilde, Cl.*" These last words are a mere record by the Company's clerk that the copyright had been regularly entered as above. The sum of 6d., annexed to the entry, was the fee for registration.

The date of the above entry in the Stationers' registers fixes the time about which printed copies of the poem were ready for sale in London. There are few books, however, respecting the circumstances of whose first publication there is room for a greater variety of curious questions. This arises from the fact that, among the numerous existing copies of the First Edition, no two are in all particulars exactly alike. They differ in their title-pages, in their dates, and in minute points throughout the text. There is involved in this, indeed, a fact of general interest to English bibliographers. In the old days of leisurely printing, it was quite common for the printer or the author of a book to make additional corrections while the printing was in progress, of which corrections only part of the total impression could have the benefit. Then, as, in the binding of the copies, all the sheets, having or not having the corrections so made, were jumbled together, there was no end to the combinations of different states of sheets that might arise in copies all really belonging to one edition; besides which, if any change in the proprietorship, or in the

author's or publisher's notions of the proper title, arose before all the copies had been bound, it was easy to cancel the first title-page, and provide a new one, with a new date if necessary, for the remaining copies. The probability is that these considerations will be found to affect all our early printed books. But they are applicable in a more than usual degree, so far as differences of title-page are concerned, to the First Edition of *Paradise Lost*. Here, for example, is a conspectus of the different forms of title-page, and other accompaniments of the text of the Poem, that have been recognised among existing copies of the First Edition. We arrange them, as nearly as can be judged, in the order in which they were issued.

First title-page.—"Paradise lost. | A | Poem | written in | Ten Books | By John Milton. | Licensed and Entred according | to Order. | London | Printed, and are to be sold by Peter Parker | under Creed Church neer Aldgate; And by | Robert Boulter at the Turke Head in Bishopsgate-street; | And Matthias Walker, under St. Dunstons Church | in Fleet-street, 1667. | " 4to. pp. 342.

Second title-page.—Same as above, except that the author's name "John Milton" is in larger type. 1667. 4to. pp. 342.

Third title-page.—"Paradise lost. A Poem in Ten Books. The Author J. M. [initials only]. Licensed and Entred according to Order. London Printed etc. [as before, or nearly so]. 1668." 4to. pp. 342.

Fourth title-page.—Same as the preceding, but the type in the body of the title larger. 1668. 4to. pp. 342.

Fifth title-page.—"Paradise lost. | A | Poem | In | Ten Books. | The Author | John Milton. | London, | Printed by S. Simmons, and to be sold by S. Thomson at | the Bishops-Head in Duck-lane, II. Mortlack at the | White Hart in Westminster Hall, M. Walker | under St. Dunstons Church in Fleet-street, and R. Boulter at | the Turke-Head in Bishopsgate-street, 1668. | " 4to. pp. 356. The chief peculiarity in this issue, as compared with its predecessors, is the increase of the bulk of the volume by fourteen pages or seven leaves. This is accounted for as follows:—In the preceding issues there had been no Prose Argument, Preface, or other preliminary matter to the text of the poem; but in this there are fourteen pages of new matter, interpolated between the title-leaf and the poem. First of all there is this *three-line* Advertisement: "*The Printer to the Reader. Courteous Reader, There was no Argument at first intended to the Book, but for the satisfaction of many that have desired it, is procured. S. Simmons.*" Then, accordingly, there follow the prose Arguments to the several Books, doubtless by Milton himself, all printed together in eleven pages; after which, in two pages of large open type, comes Milton's preface, entitled "*The Verse,*" explaining his reasons for abandoning Rime,—succeeded, on the fourteenth page, by a list of "*Errata.*" But this is not all. Simmons's three-line Address to the Reader, as given above, is, it will be observed, not grammatically correct; and, whether because Milton had found out this or not, there are some copies, with this fifth title-page, in which the ungrammatical

three-line address is corrected into a *five-line* address thus—"The Printer to the Reader. Courteous Reader, There was no Argument at first intended to the Book, but for the satisfaction of many that have desired it, I have procured it, and withall a reason of that which stumbled many others, why the Poem Rimes not. S. Simmons."

Sixth title-page.—Same as the preceding, except that, instead of four lines of stars under the author's name, there is a fleur-de-lis ornament. 1668. 4to. pp. 356. Here we have the same preliminary matter as in the preceding. There seem to be some copies, however, with the incorrect *three-line* Address, and others with the correct *five-line* Address, of the Printer.

Seventh title-page.—"Paradise lost. | A | Poem | in | Ten Books. | The Author | John Milton. | London, | Printed by S. Simmons, and are to be sold by | T. Helder, at the Angel, in Little Brittain, | 1669. | " 4to. pp. 356. Some copies with this title-page still retain Simmons's incorrect *three-line* Address to the Reader, while others have the *five-line* Address. Rest of preliminary matter as before.

Eighth and Ninth title-pages.—Same as last, except some insignificant changes of capital letters and of pointing in the words of the title. 1669. 4to. pp. 356.¹

Here are at least nine distinct forms in which, as respects the title-page, complete copies were issued by the binder, from the first publication of the work about August 1667 on to 1669, inclusively, besides which, there are the variations among individual copies arising from the two forms of the Printer's Advertisement, and the variations in the text of the poem arising from the indiscriminate binding together of sheets in the different states of correctness in which they were printed off. The variations of this last class are of absolutely no moment,—a comma in some copies where others have it not; an error in the numbering of the lines, or of a *with* for an *in*, in some copies, rectified in others; etc. On the whole, the *text* of any existing copy of the First Edition is as perfect as that of any other,—though there is an advantage in having a copy with the small list of Errata and the other preliminary matter.² But the variations in the title-page are of greater interest. Why is the author's name given in full in the title-pages of 1667, then contracted into "J. M." in two of

¹ This list is drawn up from my own inspection of all copies within my reach, assisted by consultation of the article "Milton" in Bohn's edition of Lowndes's Bibliographer's Manual, and by examination of a list given by Mr. S. Leigh Sotheby (*Ramblings*, pp. 80, 81). I believe that my list does not exhaust the variations.

² The copy of the First Edition chiefly used by myself is one with what I have called the seventh title-page, and with the *three-line* form of Simmons's Address to the Reader.

those of 1668, and again given in full in two of those of the same year, and in all those of 1669? And why, though Simmons had acquired the copyright in April 1667, and had entered the copyright as his in the Stationers' Books in August 1667, is his name kept out of sight in all the title-pages prior to that one of 1668 which is given as the Fifth in the foregoing list, and which is the first with the preliminary matter,—the preceding title-pages showing no printer's name, but only the names of three booksellers at whose shops copies might be had? Finally, why, after Simmons does think it right to appear on the title-page, are there changes in the names of the booksellers,—two of the former booksellers first disappearing and giving way to other two, and then the three of 1668 giving way in 1669 to the single bookseller, Helder of Little Britain? Very probably, in some of these changes nothing more was involved than convenience to Simmons in his trade at the time. Business may have been disarranged for a while by the Great Fire. Not impossibility, however, more was involved than this in so much changing and tossing-about of the book within so short a period. May not Simmons have been a little timid about his venture in publishing a book by the notorious Milton, whose attacks on the Church and defences of the Regicide were still fresh in the memory of all, and some of whose pamphlets had been publicly burnt by the hangman after the Restoration? May not his entering the book at Stationers' Hall simply as "a Poem in Ten Books by J. M." have been a caution on his part; and, though in the first issues he had ventured on the name "John Milton" in full, may he not have found it advisable, for a subsequent circulation in some quarters, to have copies with only the milder "J. M." upon them? May not Milton himself have suggested such precautions?

In any case, the first edition of *Paradise Lost* was a creditably printed book. It is, as has been mentioned, a small quarto,—of 342 pages in such copies as are without the "Argument" and other preliminary matter, and of 356 pages in the copies that have this addition. But the pages are not numbered,—only the lines by tens along the margin in each Book. In one or two places there is an error in the numbering of the lines, arising from miscounting. The text in each page is enclosed within lines,—single lines at the inner margin and bottom, but double lines at the top for the running title and the number of the Book, and along the outer margin columnwise for the numbering of the lines. Very great care

must have been bestowed on the revising of the proofs, either by Milton himself, or by some competent person who had undertaken to see the book through the press for him. It seems likely that Milton himself caused page after page to be read over slowly to him, and occasionally even the words to be spelt out. There are, at all events, certain systematic peculiarities of spelling, which it seems most reasonable to attribute to Milton's own instructions. Altogether, for a book printed in such circumstances, it is wonderfully accurate; and, in all the particulars of type, paper, and general getting-up, the first appearance of *Paradise Lost* must have been rather attractive than otherwise to book-buyers of that day.

The selling-price of the volume was three shillings¹; which is as if a similar book now were published at about 10s. 6d. From the retail sale of 1300 copies, therefore, the sum that would come in to Simmons, if we make an allowance for trade-deductions at about the modern rate, would be something under £140 (worth about £490 now). Out of this had to be paid the expenses of printing, etc., and the sum agreed upon with the author; and the balance would be Simmons's profit. On the whole, though he cannot have made anything extraordinary by the transaction, it must have been sufficiently remunerative. For, by the 26th of April 1669, or after the poem had been published a little over eighteen months, the stipulated impression of 1300 copies had been exhausted. The proof exists in the shape of Milton's receipt for the additional Five Pounds due to him on that contingency:—

April 26, 1669.

Received then of Samuel Simmons five pounds, being the Second five pounds to be paid mentioned in the Covenant. I say recd. by me.

John Milton ²

Witness, Edmund Upton.

¹ "A General Catalogue of Books printed in England since the dreadful Fire of London, 1666, to the end of Trinity Term, 1674; collected by Robert Clavel. London, 1675." Here, for the sake of comparison, are a few prices of similar books from the same authority:—Davenant's Works, £1: 4s.; Cowley's Works, 14s.; Reliquiæ Wottonianæ, 5s.; Donne's Poems, 4s.; Hudibras, Parts I. and II. reprinted, 3s. 6d.; Randolph's Poems, Cleveland's, and Denham's, 3s. each; Waller, and Herbert, 2s. 6d. each; Dryden's *Annus Mirabilis*, 1s. 6d.

² The original of this document was in the possession of Lady Cullum, widow of the Rev. Sir Thomas Gery Cullum, Bart., who had had it in his possession

Thus, by the end of April 1669, Milton had received in all Ten Pounds for his *Paradise Lost*. This (worth about £35 now) was all that he was to receive for the poem in his life. For, contrary to what might have been expected after a sale of the first edition in eighteen months, there was no second edition for five years more, or till 1674. Either the book was out of print for those five years, or what demand for it there continued to be was supplied out of the surplus of 200 copies which, for some reason or other, Simmons had been authorised to print beyond the 1300. But in 1674,—the last year of Milton's life,—a second edition did appear, with this title :—

Paradise Lost. | A | Poem | in | Twelve Books. | The Author | John Milton.
| The Second Edition | Revised and Augmented by the | same Author. | Lon-
don, | Printed by S. Simmons next door to the | Golden Lion in Aldersgate-
street, 1674. |

at least as far back as 1822. Its former history has not been traced; but it probably came from among those papers, left by Jacob Tonson *tertius*, of which an account has been already given (see *ante*, pp. 8-9, n.) A facsimile of it was given in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for July 1822; and there is a copy of this facsimile in Mr. Leigh Sotheby's *Ramblings*, Plate XVIII.—Connected with the document is a curious incident, which should be a warning to purchasers of such antiquities. At the public sale, in June 1859, of the manuscript collections of the late well-known antiquary Mr. Dawson Turner, there was put up what professed to be this identical receipt of Milton to Simmons for his second Five Pounds, together with what professed to be a subsequent receipt (to be presently spoken of) by Milton's widow for a final payment by Simmons on account of *Paradise Lost*. These two supposed originals were bought on commission for an American collector for £43 : 1s. Scarcely had they been bought, however, when a controversy arose as to their genuineness. Lady Cullum claimed to have in her possession the two original documents in question—how, then, could Mr. Dawson Turner have had them too? The matter was discussed in the columns of the *Athenæum* at intervals from September 1859 till February 1860. So far the mystery was cleared up. It appeared that, many years before, Sir Thomas Cullum had lent the two original documents to Mr. Dawson Turner, and that the documents put up at the sale were only copies, and not perfect copies either, of these originals; which copies Mr. Dawson Turner had made, or caused to be made, for his own use, before returning the originals. He had neglected to label them as copies, and hence the error. The Cullum documents were thus established to be the true originals, and the sale of the others was cancelled.—The body of the receipt is in the same hand as the signature; which hand, it will be seen at once, is a totally different one from that which signed the contract with Simmons two years before. Possibly it was Milton's third wife that penned this receipt for him; possibly it was some boy then attending him as reader and amanuensis.

This edition is in small octavo, with the pages numbered, but with no marginal numbering of the lines,—the pages of the text as numbered being 333. Prefixed (in some copies, at least) is a not badly executed portrait of the author, with this inscription underneath, “W. Dolle sculpsit: Johannis Miltoni effigies, ætat. 63, 1671.”¹ There are also prefixed two sets of commendatory verses: one in Latin signed “*S. B., M. D.*” and written by a certain Samuel Barrow, a physician and a private friend of Milton; the other in English, signed “*A. M.*,” and written by Andrew Marvell. But the most important difference between this and the previous edition is that, whereas the poem had been arranged in Ten Books in the first, it is here arranged in Twelve. This is accomplished by dividing what had formerly been the two longest Books of the poem, viz. Books VII. and X., into two Books each. There is a corresponding division in the “Arguments” of these Books; and the “Arguments,” instead of being given in a body at the beginning of the volume, are prefixed to the Books to which they severally apply. These changes, we are distinctly informed,² were made by Milton himself. To smooth over the breaks made by the division of the two Books, the three new lines were added which now form the beginning of Book VIII., and the five that begin Book XII.; and there are one or two other slight additions or alterations, also dictated by Milton, in the course of the text, besides a few verbal variations, such as would arise in reprinting. Account will be taken of such variations in our Notes. On the whole, the Second Edition, though pretty correct, is not so nice-looking a book as the First.

As Milton's death occurred in the year in which the second edition was published, he cannot himself have witnessed any greater “success” for his poem than might be measured by the circulation of some 1500, or, at most, some 1800, copies. But that the poem had by that time made an extraordinary impression, and had recalled attention to its author as indubitably one of the greatest poets of England or of all time, is proved not only by the language employed

¹ The same portrait (a copy, on a reduced scale, of Faithorne's celebrated engraving of Milton prefixed to his *History of Britain* in 1670) had been prefixed to Milton's *Artis Logicæ Plenior Institutio*, published in 1672, and also to the Second Edition of his *Minor Poems*, brought out in 1673.

² Memoir of Milton by his nephew Phillips, 1694. Phillips's words respecting the Second Edition are: “amended enlarg'd and differently dispos'd as to the number of books, by his own hand, that is by his own appointment.”

by Barrow and Marvell in their commendatory verses,—language which, with all allowance for the custom of eulogy in such cases, is startling yet for its vastness,—but also by other testimonies. “Jo-
 “Dreyden, Esq., Poet Laureate, who very much admired him,” says Aubrey, “went to him to have leave to putt his *Paradise Lost* into a
 “drama in rhyme. Mr. Milton received him civilly, and told him
 “he would give him leave to tagge his verses.”¹ Accordingly, some
 time before Milton’s death, his friends were scandalised, and the
 whole town amused, by hearing of that extraordinary production of
 Dryden which he professed to have founded on Milton’s epic, and
 which he entitled *The State of Innocence, or the Fall of Man: an
 Opera*. That the bad taste of this performance of the Laureate did
 not escape censure at the time might easily be proved²; but that his
 intention was in the highest degree respectful to Milton appears from
 the “Apology for Heroic Poetry and Poetic License” which he
 prefixed to the opera when he published it in 1674, just after
 Milton’s death. He there tells us that the opera had been “wholly
 written” in one month’s time, and that he had been compelled to
 publish it in self-defence, “many hundred copies of it,” and those
 full of errors, having been already “dispersed abroad” without his
 consent. He then adds these words: “I cannot, without injury to
 “the deceased author of *Paradise Lost*, but acknowledge that this
 “poem has received its entire foundation, part of the design, and
 “many of the ornaments, from him. What I have borrowed will be
 “so easily discerned [distinguished] from my mean productions that
 “I shall not need to point the reader to the places; and truly I
 “should be sorry, for my own sake, that any one should take the
 “pains to compare them together,—the original being undoubtedly
 “one of the greatest, most noble, and most sublime poems which
 “either this age or nation has produced.” Such an attestation, by a
 man in the position of Poet Laureate, may be taken as evidence of
 what was then a formed opinion in the English literary world. In
 short, before Milton’s death, such was the admiration of his *Paradise
 Lost* that the publisher Simmons may have had a reasonable pride

¹ Aubrey’s *Lives*, written about 1680, published 1813: Art “Milton.”
 “Tags” were bits of silver, or other metal, at the ends of ribbons used in dress.

² There is a sneering allusion to Dryden, for the liberty he had taken with
 Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, in Andrew Marvell’s commendatory verses prefixed to
 the second edition of the poem. See particularly lines 11—16 and 45—50.

in putting his own name on the title-page of the second edition, and in advertising his own shop, "next door to the Golden Lion in Aldersgate Street," as the place where copies were to be bought.

Four years sufficed to exhaust the Second Edition; and in 1678 a Third Edition appeared, with this title :

Paradise Lost. | A | Poem | in | Twelve Books. | The Author | John Milton.
| The Third Edition. | Revised and Augmented by the | same Author. | Lon-
don, | Printed by S. Simmons next door to the | Golden Lion in Aldersgate
Street, 1678. |

This edition is in small octavo, and in other respects on the model of its predecessor, save that there are a few verbal variations, due to the printer, and that, by the getting of a line or two more into the page in some parts of the third edition, there are two pages fewer in all in that edition than in the second, *i.e.* 331 pages instead of 333. This Third Edition is of no independent value,—the Second Edition being the last that could have been supervised by Milton himself. From the appearance of a third edition in 1678, however, it is to be inferred that by that time the second of those impressions of 1300 copies which had to be accounted for to the author was sold off (implying perhaps a total circulation up to that time of 3000 copies), and that, consequently, had the author been alive, he would have been then entitled to his third sum of Five Pounds, as by the agreement. Milton being dead, the sum was due to his widow. Whether, however, on account of the dispute between the widow and Milton's three daughters by his first wife as to the inheritance of his property, or for other reasons, Simmons was in no hurry to pay the third Five Pounds. It was not till the end of 1680 that he settled with the widow, and then in a manner of which the following receipt given by her is a record :—

I do hereby acknowledge to have received of Samuel Symonds, Cittizen and Stationer of London, the Sum of Eight pounds : which is in full payment for all my right, Title, or Interest, which I have, or ever had, in the Coppy of a Poem Intituled Paradise Lost in Twelve Bookes in 8vo. By John Milton Gent. : my late husband. Witness my hand this 21st day of December, 1680.

*Elizabeth Milton*¹

Witness, William Yapp.
Ann Yapp.

¹ Copy, with facsimile of signature, in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for July 1822, and facsimile of the whole in Mr. S. Leigh Sotheby's *Ramblings*, Plate

That is to say, Simmons, owing the widow Five Pounds, due since 1678, and in prospect of soon owing her other Five Pounds on the current impression of the Poem, preferred, or consented, to compound for the Ten by a payment of Eight in December 1680. The total sum which he could in any case have been called upon to pay for *Paradise Lost* by his original agreement was £20 (worth about £70 now), and the total sum which he did pay was £18 (worth about £63 now). If he thus got off £2, it was probably to oblige the widow, who may have been anxious to realise all she could of her late husband's property at once before leaving London. There is, indeed, a subsequent document from which it would appear as if Simmons feared having further trouble from the widow. It is a document, dated April 29, 1681, by which she formally releases Samuel Simmons, his heirs, executors, and administrators for ever, from "all and all manner of action and actions, cause and causes of "action, suits, bills, bonds, writings obligatory, debts, dues, duties, "accounts, sum and sums of money, judgments, executions, extents, "quarrels either in law or equity, controversies and demands, and all "and every other matter, cause, and thing whatsoever, which against "the said Samuel Simmons" she ever had, or which she, her heirs, executors, or administrators should or might have "by reason or "means of any matter, cause, or thing whatsoever, from the beginning of the world unto the day of these presents."¹ About the most comprehensive release possible!

From 1680, accordingly, neither Milton's widow, nor his daughters, had any share or interest whatever in the sale of *Paradise Lost*. The property remained solely with the printer Simmons. Nor did he keep it long. Even before his last transactions with the widow, he had arranged to transfer his entire interest in the poem to another bookseller, Brabazon Aylmer, for twenty-five pounds: a sum which shows that, on the whole, he cannot have been consciously unfair in his dealings with the widow. Brabazon Aylmer, whose shop was at the sign of the 'Three Pigeons in Corn-

XVIII. The original was lately in the possession of Lady Cullum; and it was the late Mr. Dawson Turner's copy of this original that was put up for sale, in June 1859, along with his similar copy of Milton's receipt for the second Five Pounds, under the false impression that they were the originals (see *ante*, p. 16, note).

¹ Copy in *Gentleman's Magazine* for July 1822, from the original, then in possession of Sir Thomas Gery Cullum, Bart.

hill, was a well-known bookseller, in a brisker way of business than Simmons had been able to pretend to. He is described by a contemporary as "a very just and religious man," "nicely exact in all his accounts," "well acquainted with the mysteries of his trade," and as having been "as often engaged in very useful designs as any other that can be named through the whole trade." He was the publisher of Dr. Isaac Barrow's works, and of some of Tillotson's. What is more interesting to us here, he had had dealings with Milton in his lifetime; for he had published, in July 1674, the little volume of Milton's *Epistolæ Familiares* and *Prolusiones Oratoriæ*: to which volume, as we saw (vol. i. pp. 118-119), there is prefixed a short preface in Aylmer's own name, explaining certain particulars in his concern with the volume. His purchase of the copyright of *Paradise Lost* from Simmons in 1680 may be taken as proving his continued interest in the man with whom he had been thus slightly in contact before. But, after all, Aylmer's connection with *Paradise Lost* was transitory. Active and accurate man of business though he was, there was in London at least one bookseller of a more active and speculative turn still, and more likely to discern what might be made commercially of a book like *Paradise Lost*. This was the famous Jacob Tonson, the first of the three booksellers of that name, and the founder of the eminent Tonson firm. He was then a very young man, having commenced business in 1677, when he was scarcely twenty-one years of age, at the sign of the Judge's Head, near the Fleet Street end of Chancery Lane. Young though he was, and rough-mannered even to rudeness, he had already some of those notions of business by the carrying out of which he was to make a new era in the English book-trade. He had already begun those relations with Dryden which were to grow closer during the rest of Dryden's life, and through which the veteran poet, if he did not get all the money that he needed, or thought himself entitled to, got more than he would probably have got had his dealings been with any one else. What made Tonson think of *Paradise Lost* as a book worth looking after, we do not precisely know. Certain it is that, on the 17th of August 1683, he bought half of the copyright of it from Brabazon Aylmer, at a higher price than Aylmer had paid for it, and that about seven years later, on the 24th of March 1690 (? 1690-91), he bought the other half.¹

¹ The authorities for the statements in this paragraph are various. The transfer of the book from Simmons to Aylmer, and then from Aylmer to Tonson,

The acquisition of the copyright of *Paradise Lost* by Jacob Tonson is a fact of some consequence in the history of the book. When Tonson bought his first half of the copyright in 1683, the book was in its third edition. About 4000 or 4500 copies in all had been printed off up to that time; of which, however, a considerable number (probably the bulk of the third edition) remained on hand. The sale of these, from Aylmer's counter or Tonson's, seems to have sufficed all demand for a year or two more. But then there came a sudden stir. In 1688, while Tonson was still only half-proprietor of the book, there appeared a Fourth Edition of it, in folio size, and with this title: "*Paradise Lost. A Poem. In Twelve Books. The Author John Milton. The Fourth Edition. Adorn'd with Sculptures. London, Printed by Miles Flesher for Richard Bently, at the Post Office in Russell-Street, and Jacob Tonson, at the Judges-Head in Chancery Lane near Fleet-street.*" An interesting fact respecting this Fourth Edition of the poem, accounting also for its large size and sumptuous form, is that it was published by subscription: one of the first books so published in England.¹ At the end of the volume is a list of "The Nobility and Gentry that encourag'd, by subscription, the printing this Edition." The list consists of more than 500 names, including those of many eminent men of the day, such as Dryden, Waller, Lord Dorset, Sir Robert Howard, Mr. (afterwards Lord) Somers, Dr. Aldrich, Atterbury, and Milton's old political antagonist, Sir Roger L'Estrange. Preceding the title-page is a portrait of Milton by R. White, adapted from Faithorne's engraving of 1670; and there is an engraving before each book of the poem. All this shows an increase of interest in the poem, and a wish to do the best for it, which it is reasonable to attribute to Jacob Tonson. He is said, indeed, to have been "advised and encouraged" in the under-

is vouched for by Bishop Newton (*Life of Milton*, 1749), who may have had the information from the then living members of the Tonson firm, his own publishers. For the other facts, see the title-page and preface to Milton's *Epistole Familiares*, edit. 1674, Nichols's *Literary Anecdotes*, i. pp. 292, 293, and Duntun's *Anecdotes*, quoted in Nichols, iii. 627. The month of the publication of the *Epistole Familiares* by Aylmer I have from the Stationers' Registers.

¹ Nichols's *Literary Anecdotes*, iv. 8. The first book published by subscription in England, Nichols here says, was Walton's Polyglott Bible (1654-57); the second, he thinks, was Dryden's Virgil; and the third, he thinks, was this edition in 1688 (which he calls Tonson's) of *Paradise Lost*. But Dryden's Virgil was not published till 1697.

taking by Somers, "who not only subscribed himself, but was zealous in promoting the subscription."¹ Dryden also, whose loyalty to Milton from the first is remarkable, is likely to have been among Tonson's advisers in the affair; and it was probably as much to oblige Tonson, as to express again his own opinion of Milton, that he wrote those now famous lines which were first given to the world at the foot of White's portrait of Milton in this very edition of 1688.—

" Three Poets, in three distant ages born,
Greece, Italy, and England did adorn.
The first in loftiness of thought surpassed ;
The next in majesty ; in both the last.
The force of nature could no farther go ;
To make a third she joined the former two."

As will be seen from the title-page of this Fourth Edition of *Paradise Lost*, Tonson was not yet sole proprietor of the copyright: his associate Richard Bently probably representing that half of the right which had been left, in 1683, still in Brabazon Aylmer's hands. Moreover, though some copies of this Fourth Edition of *Paradise Lost* were sent into the market bound up with similar folio editions of *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*, also freshly published in 1688, this seems to have been only by arrangement with a third bookseller, Randal Taylor, whose name appears on the title-pages of the two smaller poems, and who was then *their* proprietor. It was probably the success of the fourth edition of the great Epic,—whether in its separate form, as published by Bently and Tonson jointly, or as bound up with Taylor's editions of the two smaller poems, printed in the same year to match,—that induced Tonson to extend his property in Milton's poetry. At all events, as we have seen, he did, in 1690-91, buy the remaining half of the copyright of *Paradise Lost*; and from this date onwards we find him having almost a monopoly of the publication not only of that, but also of the other poems of Milton.

We may pause for a moment at the year 1690-91, for the purpose of noting another bibliographical proof of the extraordinary celebrity which had by that time, only sixteen years after the death of Milton, grown round his name, more especially on account of his *Paradise Lost*. Not only was that poem then in its fourth and hitherto most

¹ Newton's *Life of Milton*, 1749, p. xl.

sumptuous English edition ; but there had begun to be translations of it into other tongues. Not to do more than merely mention a German translation by an E. G. von Berge (of which one hears as having been published at Zerbst at the translator's own expense in 1682, but copies of which have become excessively rare), and a Latin translation of the First Book by several scholars, brought out in London in 1686 by Thomas Dring (the publisher of Milton's own second edition of his *Minor Poems* in 1673 : see *ante*, vol. 1. p. 100), one may dwell more particularly on the appearance, exactly in 1690, of a substantial octavo volume of 546 pages, printed at London by John Darby, and bearing this title : "*Paraphrasis Poetica in Triâ Johannis Miltoni, viri clarissimi, Poemata · Paradisum Amissum, Paradisum Reueneratum, et Samsonem Agonisten. Autore Gulielmo Hogao*" ("Poetical Paraphrase on three Poems of the illustrious John Milton : viz. *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, and *Samson Agonistes* : by William Hog"). As the title bears, this is a Paraphrase or free version in Latin of the whole of *Paradise Lost*, and of the other two Poems, all done by one hand. The laborious author, William Hog, was a Scot from Perthshire, who had gone to London about the year 1675 or 1676, and had been living there ever since, employed in various efforts for a scholarly livelihood, but in very hard straits. He had managed to publish in 1682 a *Paraphrasis in Jobum Poetica*, or Poetical Latin Paraphrase of the Book of Job, and subsequently a similar *Paraphrasis in Ecclesiasten Poetica*, or Latin Paraphrase of the Book of Ecclesiastes ; and this Latin Paraphrase of Milton's three great Poems seems to have been his third exercise in that once common, but never very hopeful, species of literary industry. How he came to undertake the labour we learn from himself in his *Epistola Nuncupatoria* prefixed to the volume, and dedicating it, in terms of boundless gratitude, to his lately-found Mæcenas, Dr. Daniel Cox, Professor of Medicine, Fellow of the Royal Society, etc. "More than fourteen years," he there says in some touching Latin sentences, "I have lived in England, and often "I have walked about as a stranger among strangers : and with how "many miseries have I meanwhile struggled ! To how many scorn, "how many reproaches, how many injuries, has my unfortunate "poverty exposed me ! All that while I never was able anywhere "to find a true friend, till the kind providence of a merciful God led "me into your presence." For the last three years, he goes on to

inform us, it was this good Dr. Cox that had supported him ; it was Dr. Cox, himself a man of literary abilities and tastes, and a great admirer of Milton, that had set him upon translating Milton's English poems into Latin ; and it was at Dr. Cox's expense that the present volume was published.—It was not to be the last of Mr. Hog's exertions in Latinising Milton ; for, whether it was Dr. Cox's continued liberality or anything else that sustained the painful thread of the poor man's life some while longer, there was to be a Latin Paraphrase in 1694 of Milton's *Lycidas*, followed in 1698 by a Latin Paraphrase of the *Comus*, both by the same Gulielmus Hogæus.—To these Latin translations of so much of Milton's Poetry by Hog there will be occasion to refer again in the course of this Introduction : meanwhile what has to be noted is the testimony furnished by the appearance in 1690 of Hog's Latin Translation of the whole of *Paradise Lost* to the great reputation then of that poem in particular. It was on the Translation of *Paradise Lost* first of all, Hog tells us in the prefixed Epistle to his volume, that his patron Dr. Cox had set him, the addition of translations of the *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes* having come in as an afterthought ; and Dr. Cox's reason for the suggestion had been that, at a time when the fame of *Paradise Lost* was spread throughout all England, it seemed a pity that the accident of its having been written in English should prevent sufficient acquaintance with it abroad, and should any longer confine the appreciation of "such an invention of genius, so worthy of celebrity in all lands," within the narrow limits of Britain.

Great as was the fame of *Paradise Lost* within Britain already in 1690-91, when Jacob Tonson became proprietor of the whole copyright of the poem, he was not the man to let the book rest in the mere Fourth Edition which was then maintaining that fame. In 1692 he brought out another folio edition of *Paradise Lost*, counting as the fifth of that poem, bound up with another edition (the fourth) of *Paradise Regained*. This was followed, in 1695, by a sixth edition of *Paradise Lost*, also in large folio, and with illustrations : many of the copies separate, but others bound up with *Paradise Regained*, *Samson Agonistes*, and the *Minor Poems*, all separately paged, but of the same folio size, so as to constitute together what is really the first Collective Edition of the whole of Milton's Poetry. But this sixth edition of *Paradise Lost* was distinguished by another important

accompaniment. Besides the text of the poem, but separately paged, so that it might stand apart, and form a folio volume by itself, there was an elaborate commentary, consisting of no fewer than 321 folio pages of Annotations, under this title, "Annotations on Milton's "Paradise Lost: wherein the texts of Sacred Writ relating to the "Poem are quoted; the parallel places and imitations of the most "excellent Homer and Virgil cited and compared; all the obscure "parts rendered in phrases more familiar; the old and obsolete "words, with their originals, explain'd and made easy to the English reader. By P. H. φιλοποιήτης." The "P H." who thus led the way, so largely, carefully, and laboriously, in the work of commenting Milton, and from whom all subsequent commentators have borrowed, and often with too little acknowledgment, is ascertained to have been Patrick Home or Hume, a Scotsman, of whom nothing more is known than that, at the time of the publication, he was settled as a schoolmaster somewhere near London. Tonson, one supposes, had found him out, and either set him on the work, or accepted the work from him, already done privately as a labour of love.¹

After we pass into the Eighteenth Century, editions of the *Paradise Lost*, either separately or as a part of the "Poetical Works," begin to abound. A common statement, indeed, is that it was Addison's celebrated series of criticisms on *Paradise Lost* (began in No. 267 of the *Spectator*, Jan. 5, 1711-12, and concluded in No. 369, May 3, 1712) that first awoke people to Milton's greatness as a poet, and that till then he had been neglected. The statement will not bear investigation, and is in fact one of those sheepish repetitions of

¹ It is really a pity that more is not known of this modest and meritorious "P. H.," who wrote so elaborate a commentary on *Paradise Lost* only twenty-one years after Milton's death. Richardson, noticing him in 1734 (*Explanatory Notes*, p. c.vii.), says, "I have been told this was *Philip Humes*"; Paterson, a subsequent commentator on Milton (1744), calls him "a very learned and judicious gentleman of North Britain, . . . Peter Home"; Bishop Newton, in 1749, first gives him his right name of Patrick Hume. Later writers, confusing persons, have made him *Sir* Patrick Hume. My authority for his having been a schoolmaster near London is Mr. David Laing of Edinburgh, in a paper in the *Archæologia Scotica* (vol. iii. pp. 83-91). I may add that among the graduates of the University of Edinburgh about 1680 there are more than one *Patricius Home* or *Patricius Hume*. The older Scottish spelling of the name was *Home*; but the pronunciation, even with this spelling, was, and still is in some families, *Hume*.

any inaccurate assertion once strongly made of which Literary History presents so many other examples. Not only had six editions of the *Paradise Lost* been published before the close of the seventeenth century,—three of them splendid folio editions, and one of them with a vast commentary which was in itself a tribute to the extraordinary renown of the poem; not only, before or shortly after Milton's death, had there been such public expressions of admiration for the poem, by Dryden and others, as were equivalent to a recognition of it as one of the sublimest works of English genius; not only, as we have just seen, had one poor man laboured on a Latin paraphrase of it, that foreign nations might have some notion of its splendours; but since the year 1688 Dryden's emphatic, if not very discriminating lines, above-cited as having been printed by way of motto under Milton's portrait in Tonson's edition of that year, had been a familiar stock quotation. Even before those lines were written the habit of comparing Milton with Homer and Virgil, and of wondering whether the highest greatness might not be claimed for the Englishman, had been fully formed. Addison's criticisms, therefore, were only a contribution to a reputation already traditional. Before they appeared, three new editions of the Poetical Works, including *Paradise Lost*, and forming the seventh, eighth, and ninth editions of that poem, had been published by the enterprising Tonson: to wit, an edition in royal 8vo, in 2 vols., in 1705; another 8vo edition, in 2 vols., in 1707; and a very pretty and correct pocket-edition, in 2 vols. 18mo, in 1711. When these were issued, Tonson was no longer in his first shop, the Judge's Head in Chancery Lane, but in a shop at Gray's Inn Gate, to which he had removed about 1697, in consequence of the death of his elder brother Richard, also a bookseller, who had occupied that shop, and whose son Jacob was thenceforward associated in business with his uncle as Jacob Tonson *junior* or *secundus*. It is likely enough that Addison's criticisms, widely read as they were, may have helped the flagging sale of the remaining copies of the three editions of Milton which had been issued by the Tonsons, uncle and nephew, from this shop, and which were, in any case, handier than Tonson's folio editions that had preceded them. But even this we do not know for certain; and a perverse person, founding on bibliopolic evidence merely, might even argue that Addison's papers, so far from giving an impulse to the popularity of Milton, actually checked for a while the demand for him. For it was not till

eight years after the publication of the above-mentioned ninth or small pocket-edition of Milton in 1711,—which was the current edition when Addison's papers appeared,—that the Tonsons found it advisable to bring out another edition. They had meanwhile (about 1712) removed to that house in the Strand, opposite Catherine Street,—called the Shakespeare's Head, from the sign they had adopted for it,—which continued for about half a century to be known to all London as the shop of the Tonsons. Here, in 1719, they tried a 12mo illustrated edition of *Paradise Lost* by itself. In 1720 this was followed by a splendidly-printed 4to edition of the Poetical Works collectively, in two volumes, known as "Tickell's Edition," from the share the poet Tickell had in it, and including a reprint of Addison's criticisms on *Paradise Lost*. It was published by subscription, and has a list of more than 300 subscribers prefixed to it. Again, in 1721, there was a fresh 12mo edition of the Poetical Works in 2 vols., also with Addison's critique; and in 1725 there was published an 8vo edition of *Paradise Lost* by itself, known as "Fenton's Edition," from its containing a Life of Milton by the poet Elijah Fenton. There were subsequent "Fenton" editions (so called for the same reason) of the Poetical Works as a whole in 1727 and 1730, each in 2 vols. 8vo. These, which may be called the fourteenth and fifteenth Editions of *Paradise Lost*, were, with one exception, the last editions in which Jacob Tonson the eldest, and Jacob Tonson *secundus*, had any concern. Old Tonson died March 18, 1735-6, at the age of about eighty, a very wealthy man, and with estates in different parts of England. He had ceased for a considerable time before his death to take any active share in the business, leaving it to be managed by his nephew. To his nephew also, being himself childless, he had intended to leave the bulk of his property, including the celebrated Kit-Cat portraits,—a collection of portraits of forty-three noblemen and men of letters of strong Hanoverian sentiments, who formed the Kit-Cat Club. Tonson, who was secretary to the club, had had the portraits, including his own, painted by Sir Godfrey Kneller, and hung up in a room in his villa at Barn-Elms in Surrey. But the nephew, who had himself acquired a large fortune, predeceased his uncle by a few months (November 1735), leaving three sons and three daughters, all amply provided for, and the two elder sons especially, Jacob and Richard, heirs of his business. The elder of these two, accordingly, Jacob Tonson *tertius*, having become

also chief legatee of his grand-uncle, was, from 1736 onwards, the head of the Tonson firm.¹

Before the deaths of Jacob Tonson the eldest, and his nephew, the second of the name, there was one edition of *Paradise Lost*, not yet mentioned, which, though bearing the name of Tonson on its title-page, differed so signally from all the previous editions of the poem as to be calculated to upset and ruin them. Its title in full was as follows:—“*Milton's Paradise Lost. A New Edition. By Richard Bentley, D.D. London: Printed for Jacob Tonson; and for John Poulson; and for J. Darby, A. Butterworth, and F. Clay, in Trust for Richard, James, and Bethel Wellington, 1732.*” This is Bentley's famous edition. It is a large quarto, of more than 400 pages, expensively printed, and with two portraits of Milton, engraved by Vertue. It deserves more than a passing notice.

Bentley's edition of *Paradise Lost* is, indeed, one of the curiosities of literature. The great scholar, while yielding to no one in his admiration of the poem and of its author, found many things in the received text of the poem which jared on his own notions of grammatical correctness, of metrical fitness, of rhetorical good taste, and even of poetical and intellectual truth. He had a theory to account for this. Instead of remembering that the mode of thought, the style, and the musical art of Milton's age were by no means those of Bentley's, and that, even if the general change in these respects had been less considerable, it might happen that a Milton was often carried into truisms of thought and raptures of expression which a Bentley could not reduce to rule or precedent, he boldly resorted to the conclusion that whatever was un-Bentleian in the poem, or nearly all that was so, was corrupt. “Our celebrated author when he composed this poem,” he says in his preface, “being obnoxious to the Government, poor, friendless, and what is worst of all, blind with a

¹ Authorities for statements in this paragraph are *Lowndes's Bibliographer's Manual* by Bohn, Art. “Milton,” Todd's List of Editions at the end of his edition of Milton's Poetical Works, vol. iv. Edit. of 1852, Nichols's *Literary Anecdotes*, i. 292-299, and Cunningham's *Handbook of London*, p. 209. It is interesting to know that in Kneller's portrait of old Jacob Tonson,—now or lately, with the rest of the Kit-Cat collection, in possession of Mr. Baker of Bayfordbury, Herts,—the publisher is represented in a gown and cap, and holding in his right hand a volume lettered “*Paradise Lost*.” He had a reverence for the book of which he had published so many editions.

"Gutta Serena, could only dictate his Verses to be writ by another.
 "Whence it necessarily follows, That any errors in Spelling, Pointing,
 "nay even of whole Words of a like or near Sound in Pronunciation,
 "are not to be charg'd upon the Poet, but on the Amanuensis."
 With such errors, Bentley thought, the text, as printed in all previous editions, positively swarmed, and he professed to point them out, and to give in the margin in each case his conjecture of what Milton really did dictate or mean to dictate. But not only had the amanuensis, or the amanuenses, of Milton been in fault. "The
 "Friend or Acquaintance, whoever he was, to whom Milton committed his Copy and the Overseeing of the Press, did so vilely
 "execute that Trust, that Paradise under his Ignorance and Audaciousness may be said to be *twice lost*." By the carelessness of this supposed Editor and of the printer Simmons, the First Edition, Bentley maintained, had been brought forth "polluted with such
 "monstrous Faults, as are beyond Example in any other printed
 "Book." In all such cases,—which occur by hundreds,—Bentley also offers the conjectural emendation or restoration. But worse and worse. Not only was Milton's editing friend grossly careless and ignorant; he was a scoundrel. "This suppos'd Friend," says Bentley, "knowing Milton's bad Circumstances, thought he had a fit
 "Opportunity to foist into the Book several of his own Verses, without the blind Poet's Discovery." Instances of this are abundant, according to Bentley. He cites sixty-six in his Preface as specimens; and he brackets each, as it occurs in the text, for rejection and execration. Add, lastly, such occasional "slips and inadvertencies" as Milton himself could not but have fallen into, in so long and learned a poem, by reason of his blindness,—which slips and inadvertencies Bentley also detects, but with greater diffidence as to the suggested amendments,—and some notion will be formed of the havoc that would be made in the text of Milton by accepting Bentley's editorship. Only by looking into Bentley's edition, however, can an adequate idea be obtained of its utter monstrousness. It is perhaps the most interesting example in our literature of a powerful mind applying itself admiringly to the product of a great mind of another class and of a diviner age, but feeling itself at every moment perturbed by some turn of thought, some phrase, some rhythm, out of the range of its own habits, and then, in strange unconsciousness of its own limitation, or of the lapse and flow of a nation's mind in such matters,

concluding that all that so perplexed or offended it could never really have existed or have been intended to exist, and proceeding to eject it from the work examined, and to fill up the gaps with hard contemporary putty.

Take a specimen or two out of the abundance. At B. II., 516—517, Milton's own editions have

“Toward the four winds four speedy Cherubim
Put to thir mouths the sounding Alchymie.”

Bentley attacks the imaginary Editor for his ignorance here, and proposes to restore the true reading thus :—

“Tow'rds the four winds four sturdy Cherubim
Put to their mouths the sounding Orichalc.”

He justifies the changes in two footnotes, as follows :—

V. 516. *Four speedy Cherubim.*] Not much need of Swiftness to be a good Trumpeter. For *Speedy* I suspect the Poet gave it,

Four STURDY Cherubim.

Sturdy, stout, robust, able to blow a strong Blast.

V. 517. *Put to their mouths the sounding Alchymie.*] There is a cheap Kitchin mix'd Metal for *Spoons*, etc. vulgarly call'd *Ockamie*, perhaps corruptly from *Alchymie*; but that is below Heroic Stile, and unworthy of *Milton*. And the Name, if any such, is silly. For Brass, Pewter, nay the very Silver and Gold Coin are as much Alchymie, as That is; being all mix'd Metals. He gave it thus,

Put to their mouths the sounding ORICHALC.

ὀρείχαλκον, *Orichalcum*, the most sonorous of Metals for *Tube* and *Tibia*. *Suida* in that Word cites from old Poets, *Κῶδωνας ὀρείχαλκου*, *Bells of Orichalc*, *ὀρείχαλκου λάλα κύμβαλα*, *Sounding Cymbals of Orichalc*. And our *Spenser* led the way for *Milton's* using it, in his *Musipotmos*.

*Not Bilboa Steel, nor Brass from Corinth fet,
Nor costly Orichalc from strange Phoenix.*

Let us witness to the Editor's boldness; that for *Orichalc* which he understood not, he put in *Alchymie*, from the sound of one Syllable.

Take another example. At VI., 512—520, describing the invention of gunpowder and of artillery by the rebel Angels in Heaven, Milton has :—

“Sulphurous and Nitrous Foame
They found, they mingl'd, and with suttile Art,
Concocted and adusted they reduc'd
To blackest grain, and into store conveyd :
Part hidd'n veins digg'd up (nor hath this Earth
Entrails unlike) of Mineral and Stone,

Whereof to found their Engins and thir Balls
Of missive ruin ; part incentive reed
Provide, pernicious with one touch to fire."

Here Bentley finds a string of errors, arising from the supposed Editor's ignorance of the way in which gunpowder is made, and of the terms used in gunpowder-mills ; and he thinks this is the passage "as the Poet certainly gave it"—

"Sulphurous and Nitrous Foam
They pound, they mingle, and with sooty Chark
Concocted and adusted, they reduce
To blackest grain, and into store convey :
Part hidden Veins dig up (nor hath this Earth
Entrails unlike of Mineral and Stone,)
Whereof to found their Engins and then Balls
Of missive ruin : part incentive Reed
Provide obsequious, with one touch to fire."

And so on he goes, leaving not a single page without similar emendations,—changing "*Not built*" into "*No butt*" (I. 259), "*distances*" into "*discipline*" (IV. 935), "*embraces*" into "*branches*" (V. 215), "*longitude*" into "*long career*" (VII. 373), "*loveliest*" into "*forehead*" (VIII. 559), "*is judicious*" into "*unlibidinous*" (VIII. 591), "*to the ages*" into "*out of ashes*" (X. 647), etc. etc. ; besides bracketing passages here and there as pure interpolations. The principle on which Bentley proceeds is, in short, that whatever is un-Bentleian is corrupt ; and, apart from the interest of his work as a historical curiosity,—as, in fact, an instance of a *very* "sturdy cherub" blowing an "orichalc,"—it is useful only here and there on account of some acute criticism which Bentley's great classical learning enabled him to supply.

The work, at all events, had no such effect as Bentley intended. His views as to the text of *Paradise Lost* appeared at once untenable to all who considered the subject, and were, moreover, formally replied to by Dr. Zachary Pearce, afterwards Bishop of Rochester, and by other critics.¹ In the matter of Milton's text, therefore, the course of subsequent editing proceeded as if Bentley's arguments had never been proposed.

¹ Dr. Pearce's Essay was completed in 1733, under the title "*A Review of the Text of the Twelve Books of Paradise Lost, in which the chief of Dr. Bentley's Emendations are consider'd.*" Among other pamphlets on the question was one in 1732, entitled "*Milton Restor'd and Bentley Depos'd.*"

Bentley's edition included, the editions of *Paradise Lost* hitherto enumerated bring the trade-history of the poem down to the year 1736. In that trade-history the Tonsons, it will be remarked, had been almost the sole agents. With the exception of an 8vo edition of *Paradise Lost* by itself, printed in Dublin in 1724, and an edition of the Poetical Works in 2 vols. 12mo, supposed to have been printed in Holland in 1731, there were as yet no other editions in existence than the first three by Simmons, and those which Tonson had published and republished in various sizes, from folio downwards. Of all Tonson's editions, the folio of 1695, with the elaborate annotations by Patrick Hume annexed, remained the most important; but latterly the favourite editions, with those who wanted only the text and the simpler sort of accompaniments, seem to have been the so-called "Fenton" editions of 1725, 1727, and 1730.

That the Tonsons should so long have retained the monopoly of the publication of the poem in England may strike us now as rather strange. Had the present British Copyright Law, as fixed by the Act of 1842, been in existence at the first publication of *Paradise Lost*, all copyright in the poem would have lapsed forty-two years after the date of that first publication, *i.e.* in 1709. From that year the poem would have been public property, and any one would have been at liberty to print it. It was in that very year 1709, however, that the first general act of any kind respecting copyright in books was passed in Great Britain. By this act, known as Act 8 Queen Anne c. 19,—which affected England and Scotland, but did not include Ireland,—it was provided, in respect of books then already in the market, that the authors of such books, or those claiming under them, should have an undisturbed copyright for twenty-one years, counting from the 10th of April 1710. This, though it apparently abrogated the notion, previously entertained in a loose form, that copyright in books was perpetual, was probably a boon at the time to those commercially interested in books. For, as there had been no express legal sanction to the common notion of a perpetual copyright in books, the reprinting of books without consent of the authors, or of those who claimed under them, had become not uncommon; and, since 1694, when the Censorship of the Press virtually ceased, there had not been the special means of redress in such cases previously afforded by the power of calling to account persons who published books without being able to produce the licensed manuscript or the record

of it in Stationers' Hall. Twenty-one years of continued monopoly from 1710 was probably, in these circumstances, as much as the Tonsons could have hoped for in the case of a book like *Paradise Lost*, of which they had already had the profit for twenty years. We have seen that they made good use of the further time allowed them.

That time, according to what would now be the legal interpretation of Queen Anne's Act, should have ended in 1731. We might have expected, accordingly, that, closely following the last-mentioned "Fenton" edition of Milton's Poetical Works in 1730, there should have been editions of *Paradise Lost* by other publishers than the Tonsons. We do not find, however, any such immediate stepping-in of other publishers. Not only were the numerous Tonson editions then on sale sufficient for the demand for some years, but, when new editions were wanted, they were still supplied by the Tonsons. It was Jacob Tonson *tertius* that was now the head of the celebrated firm in the Strand,—that Jacob Tonson to whose soft and gentle manners, zeal for literature, and liberality of dealing, Dr. Johnson paid a tribute which one still reads with pleasure.¹ Under this Jacob Tonson, who had a less active partner in his brother Richard, the firm lost none of its fame. While continuing, and even extending, those operations in the works of Shakespeare which his father and great-uncle had bequeathed to him,² this Jacob Tonson the third did not neglect the traditional interest of his firm in Milton's Poems. In 1737 he published a new edition of *Paradise Lost* in 8vo; in 1738, a new form of the "Fenton" edition of the same; and in 1746 an edition of the Poetical Works in 4 vols. 12mo, two of the volumes containing *Paradise Lost*. But why, it may be asked, since the copyright had lapsed in 1731, were there not now editions by other publishers to compete with these of Tonson? The fact seems to be that, notwithstanding the terms of the Act of Queen Anne, there was no idea that the copyright really *had* lapsed. The old notion of an indefinite copyright in books still existed; and, in

¹ In the preface to the re-issue in 1778 of the edition of Shakespeare which he had prepared for Tonson, and which was originally published in 1765.

² They had not published so many editions of Shakespeare as of Milton, but they had published the chief editions of Shakespeare issued in their time,—to wit, Pope's in 1725 (reprinted by them twice), and Theobald's first edition in 1733.

accordance with this notion, there was a custom among the London publishers of not interfering with each other's supposed copyrights. In Ireland, it was understood, English books *might* be reprinted; and, accordingly, in addition to the Dublin edition of *Paradise Lost* in 1724, already mentioned, there were two fresh Dublin editions in 1747 and 1748 respectively, the last on "Irish paper." But, as far as England and Scotland were concerned, it never seems to have occurred to Tonson, or to others for him, that his property in Milton's Poems was at an end. As late as 1761, Bishop Newton¹ repeats a statement on this point previously made by himself in 1749,² and by Birch in 1751.³ Mentioning that second transaction of the first Jacob Tonson by which, in March 1690-1, he became sole proprietor of *Paradise Lost* after Simmons and Brabazon Aylmer, Bishop Newton, in 1761, adds these words: "Except one-fourth of it, which has been assigned to several persons, his [the eldest Jacob Tonson's] family have enjoyed the right of copy ever since." With the exception, therefore, of a fourth part of the copyright, which, for some trade reason, had been assigned to divers persons jointly before 1749, the Tonsons regarded themselves, even in 1761, as the legal owners of *Paradise Lost*.⁴

Bishop Newton's own edition, in two large quarto volumes, published by subscription in 1749, bears this title: "*Paradise Lost. A Poem, in Twelve Books. The Author, John Milton. A New Edition, with Notes of various Authors. By Thomas Newton, D.D. London: Printed for J. and R. Tonson and S. Draper in the Strand. 1749.*" This edition also, therefore, belongs, in part at least, to the seemingly endless series of editions published by the Tonsons. But

¹ Newton's Life of Milton, prefixed to the Poetical Works in his edition of 1761, p. lviii.

² Same, prefixed to Newton's edition of *Paradise Lost* in 1749, pp. xxxviii. xxlix.

³ Birch's Life of Milton, prefixed to the Prose Works, edition of 1751, p. lviii.

⁴ What is here stated will account for the fact that so many of what may be called the *Paradise Lost* relics,—to wit, the licensed manuscript of the first Book of the Poem (see *ante*, p. 6), Milton's agreement for the copyright with Simmons (see *ante*, pp. 7-8), his Receipt to Simmons for the second Five Pounds (see *ante*, p. 15), and the widow's subsequent receipt and discharge to Simmons (see *ante*, p. 19),—should have come down through the Tonsons. The firm had naturally come into possession of all the business documents relating to the Poem, and had retained them among their papers.

the edition has a distinction that cannot be claimed for any previous one, unless it be the folio of 1695 with Hume's Annotations. Newton was not yet Bishop of Bristol (to which dignity he attained in 1761), but only D.D. and the holder of a London living, to which he had been presented by Pulteney, Earl of Bath. It was on Lord Bath's recommendation, together with that of Dr. Zachary Pearce, then Bishop of Bangor, afterwards of Rochester (already mentioned as a defender of Milton's text against Bentley's proposed emendations), that Newton had undertaken a new edition of *Paradise Lost*. His design was, he says, to give such an edition as would be given of a classic author, *i.e.* with an accurate text and "*cum notis variorum*." For the text, accordingly, he referred, he says, to the First and Second Editions, which alone can be called Milton's own. He followed these editions faithfully, with proper disregard of Bentley, and with only the ordinary allowances for changes of spelling and pointing, though here and there suggesting an emendation. The distinction of the edition, however, hardly lies in the text; in which respect some of the previous editions of Tonson, larger and smaller, had been very accurate. It lies rather in the numerous footnotes: many of them Newton's own; others collected from previous critics and commentators, such as Hume, Addison, Bentley, Pearce, and Richardson; and others supplied to Newton during the progress of the work by private friends, among whom he mentions Pearce again, Warburton, Dr. Heylin, and Mr. Thyer of the Manchester Library. The edition is, in fact, a "variorum" edition. Having been printed in very handsome form, partly at the Earl of Bath's expense, who also "generously contributed the copper-plates to beautify and adorn it," and to whom Newton dedicated it in terms of the highest eulogy, it came before the world with every advantage. The list of subscribers fills twelve pages, and is headed by the Prince and Princess of Wales. With the exception of the "copper-plates,"—of which the less said now the better,—Newton's edition of *Paradise Lost* in 1749, in two vols. large quarto, is still a handsome book in a library. It met with such success that *Paradise Regained*, *Samson Agonistes*, and the rest of the poems, similarly edited and illustrated, were added in a separate quarto volume in 1752. The three volumes together, bearing date 1749-52, form Newton's first edition of Milton's Poetical Works.

The appearance of Newton's edition of Milton marks an epoch

not only in Milton editing, but also in Milton publishing. Although that edition came forth by arrangement with Tonson, and bore Tonson's name on the title-page, and although Newton's *Life of Milton* prefixed to it contained the distinct statement that the Tonson firm were still chief proprietors of the copyright of *Paradise Lost*, it is precisely from this period that we find the Tonson monopoly in Milton's Poems discontinued. The Tonson business, indeed, was carried on,—still in the Strand, but finally in a house near Catherine Street, opposite to the former more famous house,—till as late as March 31, 1767, when it was brought to a close by the death of Jacob Tonson *tertius*, without issue. Nor, to the last, did Tonson cease to traffic in Milton. In addition to all the previous Tonson editions, and to Newton's new "variorum" edition, we find a republication of Tonson's "Fenton" edition of *Paradise Lost* in 1751, another edition of the same poem in 24mo by Tonson in 1753, and three editions of the Poetical Works, in 1758, 1759, and 1760 respectively, beautifully printed at Birmingham by Baskerville, but for Tonson as publisher. But other publishers were now on the alert. Between 1750 and the death of Jacob Tonson *tertius* in 1767, there were three or four editions of *Paradise Lost* published in London by other houses than that of the Tonsons: the earliest being one in 12mo in 1751, "printed by R. Walker in the Little Old Bailey," and edited, with a selection of notes, by "John Marchant, Gent." During the same period there was a Glasgow edition of *Paradise Lost* (1750), and there were four Edinburgh editions of the Poetical Works collectively (1752, 1755, 1762 and 1767), and one new Dublin edition of the Poetical Works (1752). Dublin editions were not to be prevented; but why did not Tonson, claiming the copyright as late as 1761, try to make good his claim against the infringing London, Edinburgh, and Glasgow publishers? The likelihood is that, though he asserted his claim, he was afraid to try it at law. It was not, indeed, till some years after Jacob Tonson's death that a legal decision was given settling this and all similar questions. Action having been taken by the supposed holders of the copyright of Thomson's *Seasons* against Donaldson of Edinburgh for an edition of the *Seasons* in 1768 (two of the above-named Edinburgh editions of Milton's Poems had been published by this same Donaldson), it was decided in 1774, on appeal to the House of Lords, that the notion of a perpetual copyright in such books was a mere assumption, inasmuch as, whatever

right at common law an author or his assigns might have had in his books, that right had been taken away by the statute of Queen Anne, and all property of the kind was regulated by the terms of the statute. According to this decision, Thomson's *Seasons* had been public property since 1757, and, by application of the decision to *Paradise Lost*, that poem had been common property since 1731. It was probably a shrewd anticipation what the decision would be that had led Tonson to be content with the long monopoly in Milton which he and his firm had already enjoyed,—a monopoly of twenty years beyond what the statute had given,—and to acquiesce publicly in what he privately held to be infractions of his right. From 1774, at all events, the last vestige of the tradition of a perpetual copyright in books disappeared in Britain.

During the thirty-three years of the eighteenth century which had to run after the great name of Tonson had ceased from the book-selling world, *i.e.* from 1767 to 1800, there was an active competition among British publishers for the supply of the continued demand for Milton's Poems. Fourteen or fifteen new editions of *Paradise Lost* during this period are enumerated, and about as many new editions of the collective Poetical Works in different forms.¹ Among these various editions we may note the following:—a folio edition of *Paradise Lost* in 1770, by Foulis of Glasgow; the edition of the Poetical Works in 1779, in 3 vols. small 8vo, with Life by Dr. Johnson, which formed part of Johnson's series of the English Poets; an edition of *Paradise Lost*, "illustrated with Texts of Scripture by John Gillies, D.D., one of the ministers of Glasgow," published in London in 1788; an edition of the first two Books of *Paradise Lost*, published at Bury St. Edmund's in 1792-3, by Capel Lofft, Esq., with the original spelling in part restored, and other peculiarities; and, finally, the magnificent edition of the Poetical Works in three folio volumes, with Life by William Hayley, and engravings from designs by Westall, published by Boydell and Nicol in 1794-7. But even this last superb book, being without notes, did not supersede Bishop Newton's "variorum" edition. Originally published in 1749-52, Newton's edition of the Poetical Works remained the standard library edition till the close of the century, and was reprinted no fewer than eight times, either in its first form of three vols. 4to, or in the form of 4

¹ Lowndes's *Bibliographer's Manual*, by Bohn, Art. "Milton"; and List of Milton Editions in Todd, vol. iv. Edit. of 1852.

vols. 8vo. Use was also made of Newton's text and his notes in some of the smaller contemporary editions of *Paradise Lost*.

Through the first half of the present century the "variorum" edition of Milton's Poetical Works by the Rev. Henry John Todd (1763—1845) may be said to have superseded, for library purposes, Newton's and all others. The first edition was in 1801, in 6 vols. 8vo, the editor being then Rector of Allhallows, Lombard Street, London. There was a second edition in 1809, in 7 vols.; a third in 1826, in 6 vols.; and a fourth in 4 vols., in 1842,—at which time Todd was Archdeacon of Cleveland in Yorkshire. In Todd's editions are amassed, in almost confusing over-abundance, selections from the notes, criticisms, elucidations, and dissertations of the whole series of previous editors and commentators, together with a considerable quantity of fresh matter, historical and critical, by Todd himself. They retain the value due to great and miscellaneous accumulation of material actuated by conscientiousness and pious devotion to the subject, they ought always to be spoken of with respect; and whoever writes at large about Milton and his Poetry must use their stores, whether he makes sufficient acknowledgment or not. In 1831, or between Todd's third edition and his fourth, there had appeared Mr. Pickering's Aldine edition of Milton's Poetical Works, in 3 vols. 12mo, with Life by the Rev. John Mitford; which edition has been reprinted more than once. In 1835 appeared, in 6 vols. 8vo, the Poetical Works, edited, with Notes and a Life, by Sir Egerton Brydges; of which edition there have been reprints in one volume. In 1851 there was issued by Mr. Pickering an edition, in 8 volumes 8vo, of all the Works of Milton, both in prose and in verse, with the omission, however, of the Treatise on Christian Doctrine; to which edition was prefixed, in a revised form, the Life written for the Aldine edition of the Poems by the Rev. John Mitford. It is to be regretted that an edition so handsome to the eye should not have been more correct, and should be without those accompaniments of accurate dating, explanation of the circumstances of the several publications, and other historical elucidations, which are essential to a good edition of the complete works of a great writer. Among scores of other recent editions of *Paradise Lost* there ought to be special mention of Mr. Thomas Keightley's, included in his edition of Milton's Poetical Works, in 2 vols. 8vo, in 1859. Mr. Keightley took great pains

with the text, more especially with the punctuation, which he revised throughout according to a system of his own. He also gave a good selection of notes from the stores of Todd and other commentators, and added not a few independent notes and criticisms; while in his companion volume on the *Life, Opinions, and Writings of Milton* (1855) will be found a distinct "Introduction to Paradise Lost," containing much that readers of the poem in his Edition would do well to take along with them. In 1865 there was a London reprint, in one volume 8vo, of an American Edition of Milton's Poetical Works by Professor Charles Dexter Cleveland of Philadelphia. There were brief notes to *Paradise Lost*, as to the other poems, in this edition; but its chief peculiarity is an extensive verbal index to the poetry, founded upon Todd's Verbal Index, first published in his edition of 1809. Mr. R. C. Browne's edition of Milton's English Poems for the Clarendon Press Series, in two neat volumes, with excellent and scholarly notes to all the included poems, appeared in 1870; and in 1878, four years after the appearance of the first issue of the present edition of Milton's Poetical Works, there was published an edition in two volumes, also with notes to all the poems, by John Bradshaw, M.A., LL.D.

SECTION II.

CONCEPTION OF THE POEM AND HISTORY OF ITS COMPOSITION.

It was in 1639, just after Milton's return from his Italian tour, in his thirty-first year, that he first bethought himself seriously of some great literary work that should be more commensurate with his powers than any of the pieces he had yet written. To this he was partly moved, as he himself tells us, by the reception which some of those earlier pieces had met with among the Italian scholars and men of letters whose acquaintance he had made while abroad. "Perceiving," he says in his pamphlet entitled *The Reason of Church Government*, published in 1641, "that some trifles which I had in memory, composed at under twenty or thereabout, met with acceptance above what was looked for, and other things which I had shifted in scarcity of books and conveniences to patch up amongst them were received with written encomiums, which the Italian is not forward to bestow

" on men of this side the Alps, I began thus far to assent to them,
 " and divers of my friends here at home, and not less to an inward
 " prompting which now grew daily upon me, that by labour and
 " intent study (which I take to be my portion in this life), joined
 " with the strong propensity of nature, I might perhaps leave some-
 " thing so written to aftertimes as they should not willingly let it die.
 " These thoughts at once possessed me and these other: that, if I
 " were certain to write, as men buy leases, for three lives and down-
 " ward, there ought no regard be sooner had than to God's glory by
 " the honour and instruction of my country. For which cause, and
 " not only for that I knew it would be hard to arrive at the second
 " rank among the Latins, I applied myself to that resolution which
 " Ariosto followed against the persuasions of Bembo, to fix all the
 " industry and art I could unite to the adorning of my native tongue:
 " not to make verbal curiosities the end (*that* were a toilsome vanity),
 " but to be an interpreter and relater of the best and sagest things
 " among mine own citizens throughout this Island in the mother-
 " dialect; that what the greatest and choicest wits of Athens, Rome,
 " or modern Italy, and those Hebrews of old, did for *their* country,
 " I, in my proportion, with this over and above of being a Christian,
 " might do for mine; not caring to be once named abroad, though
 " perhaps I could attain to that, but content with these British
 " Islands as my world, whose fortune hath hitherto been that, if
 " the Athenians, as some say, made their small deeds great and
 " renowned by their eloquent writers, England hath had *her* noble
 " achievements made small by the unskillful 'handling' of monks and
 " mechanics."¹ From this passage, written just after the meeting
 of the Long Parliament, and when Milton was for the first time a
 London householder on his own account, we learn three things:
 / first, that, from his return from Italy about two years before, he had
 ' been full of the idea of some great literary enterprise; secondly, that
 he had resolved that it should not be in Latin, but in English; and,
 thirdly, that he did not despair of producing such a work as should
 be an example of a new kind of nobleness in the national literature
 of Britain. He does not here tell us that he had gone so far as to
 determine that the intended work should be an epic poem, and that
 he had all but fixed on a subject. These facts, however, we learn
 from his Latin poem to Manso, written at Naples just before his

¹ *The Reason of Church Government*, Book II., Introduction.

return to England, and from his *Epitaphium Damonis*, written immediately after his return. Passages in these two pieces (see *Mansus*, lines 78—84, and *Epitaphium Damonis*, lines 155—178) distinctly prove that, while in Italy, he had conceived the notion of an English epic poem on the subject of the legendary history of Britain, including the Romance of Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, and that, for some time at least after his return, this idea still fascinated him. Gradually, however, the idea had lost its hold; and, by the time when the foregoing passage was written, Milton, though still in the same general state of mind as to *some* great literary work to be undertaken and carried out, was all at sea again both as to the subject and as to the form. He had become uncertain whether the dramatic form, or some combination of the dramatic and the lyric, might not be fitter for his purpose than the epic; and, relinquishing the subject of Arthur, he had begun to look about for other subjects. All this we learn from the sequel to the passage already quoted. "Time serves not now," he there says, "and perhaps I might seem too profuse, to give any certain account of what the mind, at home in the spacious circuits of her musing, hath liberty to propose to herself, though of highest hope and hardest attempting: whether that *Epic* form whereof the two poems of Homer, and those other two of Virgil and Tasso, are a diffuse, and the Book of Job a brief, model; or whether the rules of Aristotle herein are strictly to be kept, or nature to be followed, which, in them that know art and use judgment, is no transgression, but an enriching of art; and, lastly, what king or knight before the Conquest might be chosen in whom to lay the pattern of a Christian hero. And, as Tasso gave to a prince of Italy his choice whether he would command him to write of Godfrey's expedition against the Infidels, or Belisarius against the Goths, or Charlemain against the Lombards, if to the instinct of nature and the emboldening of art aught may be trusted, and that there be nothing adverse in our climate, or the fate of this age, it haply would be no rashness from an equal diligence and inclination to present the like offer in our own ancient stories. Or whether those *Dramatic* constitutions wherein Sophocles and Euripides reign shall be found more doctrinal and exemplary to a nation. The Scripture also affords us a divine Pastoral Drama in the Song of Solomon, consisting of two persons and a double chorus, as Origen rightly judges; and the Apocalypse

" of Saint John is the majestic image of a high and stately Tragedy, " shutting up and intermingling her solemn scenes and acts with a " sevenfold chorus of halleluiahs and harping symphonies: and this " my opinion the grave authority of Paræus, commenting that Book, " is sufficient to maintain. Or if occasion shall lead to imitate " those magnificent *Odes* and *Hymns* wherein Pindarus and Callimachus " are in most things worthy, some others in their frame judicious, in " their matter most and end faulty; but those frequent Songs " throughout the Law and Prophets beyond all these, not in their " divine argument alone, but in the very critical art of composition, " may be easily made appear over all the kinds of *Lyric* poetry to be " incomparable."¹ This whole passage is to be taken as a literal record of Milton's meditations and hesitations with himself over his great project in his house in Aldersgate Street in 1641, when the work of the Long Parliament was waxing warmer. He had still some inclination to the epic form, but wavered between an epic of the ordinary heroic or historic kind and an epic of some other conceivable kind that Scripture might suggest; and, if he were to choose the ordinary or historic kind, there were so many subjects from British History competing in his mind that he could repeat Tasso's offer to let another person decide which he should take. But the dramatic and lyrical forms had also their attractions for him, and in each of these forms there were possible varieties. Thus, if he resolved to write a drama, should it be a tragedy of British legend, after the model of the tragedies of the Greek dramatists, or should it be a tragedy of a Scriptural kind, with interspersed songs and choral accompaniments?

Even had Milton not told us all this so distinctly in one of his prose-pamphlets, we should have had the means of knowing most of it. Some of the very papers which he had by him when he was writing that pamphlet in his house in Aldersgate Street are still extant in the famous volume of Milton relics in the library of Trinity College, Cambridge²; and among these is one most interesting record of his literary schemings and hesitations about this time, in the shape of a list, in his own hand, of about one hundred subjects which he had jotted down as all suitable for dramatic treatment. He had jotted

¹ *The Reason of Church Government*, Book II., Introduction.

² For a more detailed account of this Cambridge volume of Milton MSS. see the General Introduction to the *Minor Poems*, *ante*, vol. i. pp. 102-107.

these down, apparently, from day to day, as they struck him in the course of his readings, with the intention of estimating their relative degrees of merit, and at last fixing on the one, or the one or two, that should seem best. Sixty of the subjects are Scriptural, *fifty-two* being from the Old Testament, and *eight* from the New. Among the Old Testament subjects for tragedies are two from the history of Abraham, and others at various points of interest from the Flood downwards through the history of the Patriarchs, the Hebrew Judges, and the Kings both of Judah and Israel: in fact, from Genesis to the Books of Kings and Chronicles. The subjects from the New Testament include one relating to John the Baptist and several from the life of Christ. Most of the subjects in both sets are merely jotted down in the form of titles; but in other cases there is a brief sketch of the probable plot of the drama, with a list of the probable persons. Following the Scriptural subjects, in a separate list headed "British Trag.," is a series of *thirty-three* subjects for tragedies from British History, from the end of the period of the Roman occupation, on through the times of the Saxon Heptarchy, and as far as to the Norman Conquest; and added to these is a distinct list of *five* subjects from Scottish History, with the heading "Scotch Stories, or rather British of the North Parts." It is worthy of remark that among the British subjects there is no mention of Arthur, the favourite heroes being rather Vortigern, Edwin of Northumbria, Edward the Confessor, and Harold. Among the Scottish subjects Milton was bold enough, though Shakespeare had preceded him, to set down *Macbeth*.

This most interesting list of subjects, still extant in Milton's own hand, and written by him, as may be proved, between 1639 and 1642, corroborates in a singular manner his account published in his prose-pamphlet at that time of what his mind "at home in the spacious circuits of her musing" had then liberty to propose to herself. But it does more than this. It shows a stronger determination to the dramatic form than we should have inferred from the passage in the pamphlet. All the subjects in the long list are subjects for "Tragedies"; and, if Milton still contemplated an epic as an alternative, the fact is not noted. But, further, though the list, by the multitudinousness and variety of its subjects, confirms the account which Milton gives of his uncertainty in this matter, it furnishes evidence at the same time that he was, consciously or unconsciously, tending towards one particular subject. Among the Scriptural sub-

jects most fully sketched out, and which, it may be assumed therefore, attracted Milton most as they occurred to him, are these seven: *Abram from Morea, or Isaac Redeemed, Sodom, Dinah, Moabitides or Phineas* (Numbers xxv.), *Abias Thersæus* (the Sickness of Abijah, 1 Kings xiv.), *Baptistes*, and *Christus Patiens* (the Agony in the Garden). But there is one subject which predominates in the list over all these. This is PARADISE LOST, expressly set down under that now familiar title, and figuring in the list as no other subject is permitted to figure. For, in the first place, it is at the head of the total list of subjects, as if, when Milton began to look about for possible subjects, this was the very first that flashed upon his thoughts. But, in the second place, once the subject had been thought of, it evidently held its place in Milton's estimation more than any of the others. There are no fewer than four separate drafts of this one subject as meditated for dramatic treatment. The first Draft consists merely of a list of *dramatis personæ*, as follows:

"*The Persons* —Michael; Heavenly Love; Chorus of Angels; Lucifer; Adam, Eve, with the Serpent; Conscience; Death; Labour, Sickness, Discontent, Ignorance, with others, Mutes; Faith; Hope; Charity."

This Draft having been cancelled, another is written parallel with it, as follows:

"*The Persons*. —Moses [originally written 'Michael or Moses,' but the words 'Michael or' deleted, so as to leave 'Moses' as preferable for the drama]; Justice, Mercy, Wisdom; Heavenly Love; the Evening Star, Hesperus; Lucifer; Adam; Eve; Conscience; Labour, Sickness, Discontent, Ignorance, Fear, Death, [as] Mutes; Faith; Hope; Charity."

This having also been scored out, there follows a third Draft, more complete, as follows:

"PARADISE LOST:—*The Persons*. Moses *προλογίζει*, recounting how he assumed his true body; that it corrupts not because of his [being] with God in the Mount; declares the like of Enoch and Elijah, besides the purity of the place, — that certain pure winds, dews, and clouds, preserve it from corruption; whence exhorts to the sight of God; tells them they cannot see Adam in the state of innocence by reason of their sin.—[Act I.]: Justice, Mercy, Wisdom, debating what should become of Man if he fall. Chorus of Angels sing a hymn of the Creation.—Act II.: Heavenly Love; Evening Star. Chorus sing the marriage-song and describe Paradise. —Act III.: Lucifer contriving Adam's ruin. Chorus fears for Adam and relates Lucifer's rebellion and fall.—Act IV.: Adam, Eve, fallen; Conscience cites them to God's examination. Chorus bewails and tells the good Adam hath lost. —Act V.: Adam and Eve, driven out

" of Paradise, presented by an Angel with Labour, Grief, Hatred, Envy, War, "Famine, Pestilence, Sickness, Discontent, Ignorance, Fear, [as] Mutes,—to "whom he gives their names,—likewise Winter, Heat, Tempest, etc.; Death "entered into the world; Faith, Hope, Charity, comfort and instruct him. "Chorus briefly concludes."

This is left standing; but in another part of the MS., as if written after some interval of time, is a fourth Draft, as follows:

" ADAM UNPARADIZED.—The Angel Gabriel, either descending or entering,—showing, since the globe is created, his frequency as much on Earth as in Heaven,—describes Paradise. Next the Chorus, showing the reason of his coming,—to keep his watch, after Lucifer's rebellion, by the command of God, —and withal expressing his desire to see and know more concerning this excellent and new creature, Man. The Angel Gabriel, as by his name signifying a Prince of Power, passes by the station of the Chorus, and, desirous by them, relates what he knew of Man, as the creation of Eve, with their love and marriage. —After this, Lucifer appears, after his overthrow; bemoans himself; seeks revenge upon Man. The Chorus prepares resistance at his first approach. At last, after discourse of enmity on either side, he departs; whereat the Chorus sing of the battle and victory in Heaven against him and his accomplices, as before, after the first Act, was sung a hymn of the Creation.—Here again may appear Lucifer, relating and consulting on what he had done to the destruction of Man. Man next and Eve, having been by this time seduced by the Serpent, appear confusedly, covered with leaves. Conscience, in a shape, accuses him; Justice cites him to the place whither Jehovah called for him. In the meantime the Chorus entertains the stage, and is informed by some Angel of the manner of the Fall. Here the Chorus bewails Adam's fall.—Adam and Eve return and accuse one another; but especially Adam lays the blame to his wife; is stubborn in his offence. Justice appears, reasons with him, convinces him. The Chorus admonishes Adam, and bids him beware Lucifer's example of impenitence.—The Angel is sent to banish them out of Paradise; but, before, causes to pass before his eyes, in shapes, a masque of all the evils of this life and world. He is humbled, relents, despairs. At last appears Mercy; comforts him, promises him the Messiah; then calls in Faith, Hope, Charity; instructs him. He repents, gives God the glory, submits to his penalty. The Chorus briefly concludes.—Compare this with the former Draft."¹

These schemes of a possible drama on the subject of Paradise

¹ Facsimiles of these four Drafts are given in Mr. S. Leigh Sotheby's *Rambles* (Plates IV. and VII.) They are very interesting, as showing Milton in the act of jotting down his scheme in its different stages, erasing the first Drafts as he proceeds to the others, and inserting afterthoughts and amplifications in these. I have done my best to print and point the drafts so as to bring out Milton's exact intention in each. The long dashes in the Fourth Draft indicate the division into Acts, as intended by Milton: each Act, it will be observed, ending with a Chorus.

Lost were written out by Milton, we repeat, as early as between 1639 and 1642, or between his thirty-first and his thirty-fourth year. They are part, we repeat, of a list of about a hundred subjects which then occurred to him in the course of his reading as worth considering for the great English Poem which he hoped to give to the world. From the place and the proportion of space which they occupy in the list it is apparent that the subject of *Paradise Lost* had then fascinated him more strongly than any of the others, and that, if his notion of an epic on King Arthur was given up, a drama on *Paradise Lost* was looming before him as the most likely substitute.

In the same pamphlet of 1641 in which Milton had taken the public so frankly into his confidence respecting his design of some great English Poem, he went on to pledge himself that, though his interest in the great political questions of the time obliged him meanwhile to postpone the execution of his design, it should not be abandoned. Although a sense of duty had compelled him, he says, to "leave a calm and pleasing solitariness, fed with cheerful and "confident thoughts, to embark in a troubled sea of noises and "hoarse disputes," he looked forward to a future time of quiet and leisure when he should be free to resume his vocation as an English poet. "Neither do I think it shame," he continues, "to covenant "with any knowing reader, that for some few years yet I may go on "trust with him toward the payment of what I am now indebted, as "being a work not to be raised from the heat of youth, or the vapours "of wine, like that which flows at waste from the pen of some vulgar "amorist, or the trencher-fury of a riming parasite, nor to be obtained "by the invocation of Dame Memory and her Siren daughters, but "by devout prayer to that Eternal Spirit, who can enrich with all "utterance and knowledge, and sends out his Seraphim with the "hallowed fire of his altar to touch and purify the lips of whom he "pleases. To this must be added industrious and select reading, "steady observation, insight into all seemly and generous arts and "affairs: till which in some measure be compassed, at mine own "peril and cost, I refuse not to sustain this expectation from as many "as are not loth to hazard so much credulity upon the best pledges "that I can give them." ¹

Yet another fact of interest. When Milton thus announced to the public his design of some great English poem, to be accomplished

¹ *The Reason of Church Government*, Book II., Introduction.

at leisure, and when he was privately considering with himself whether a tragedy on the subject of *Paradise Lost* might not best fulfil the conditions of such a design, he had actually gone so far as to write not only the foregoing drafts of the tragedy, but even some lines by way of opening. Our authority is his nephew, Edward Phillips. Speaking of *Paradise Lost*, and of the author's original intention that it should be a tragedy, Phillips tells us, "In the Fourth Book of the Poem there are six [ten?] verses, which, several years before the Poem was begun, were shown to me, and some others, as designed for the very beginning of the said tragedy."¹ The verses referred to by Phillips are those (P. L. IV. 32—41) that now form part of Satan's speech on first standing on the Earth, and beholding, among the other glories of the newly-created World, the Sun in his full splendour in the heavens :

" O thou, that, with surpassing glory crowned,
Look'st from thy sole dominion like the god
Of this new World,—at whose sight all the stars
Hide their diminished heads ! to thee I call,
But with no friendly voice, and add thy name,
O Sun ! to tell thee how I hate thy beams,
That bring to my remembrance from what state
I fell, how glorious above thy sphere,
Till pride and worse ambition threw me down,
Warring in Heaven against Heaven's matchless King !"²

Phillips's words "several years before the Poem was begun" would not, by themselves, fix the date at which he had seen those lines. But in Aubrey's earlier Memoir of Milton (1680), containing information which Aubrey had derived from Phillips, this passage occurs: "In the 4th booke of *Paradise Lost* there are about 6 verses of Satan's exclamation to the Sun w^{ch} Mr. E. Phi. remembers about 15 or 16 yeares before ever his Poem was thought of; w^{ch} verses were intended for the beginning of a tragædie, w^{ch} he had design'd, but was diverted from it by other besinesse." Here we have indirectly Phillips's own authority that he had read the verses in question at a date which we shall see reason to fix at 1642. He

¹ Memoir of Milton by Phillips, prefixed to English Edition of Milton's *Letters of State*, 1694.

² Phillips, in quoting the lines, substitutes "glorious" for "matchless," in the last line.

was then a pupil of his uncle, and living with him in his house in Aldersgate Street.

Alas! it was not "for some few years" only, as Milton had thought in 1641, that the execution of the great work then so solemnly promised had to be postponed. For a longer time than he had expected, England remained in a condition in which he did not think it right, even had it been possible, that men like him should be writing poems. Only towards the end of Cromwell's Protectorate, when Milton had reached his fiftieth year, and had been for five or six years totally blind, does he seem to have been in circumstances to resume effectually the design to which he had pledged himself. By that time, however, there was no longer any doubt as to the theme he would choose. All the other themes once entertained had faded more or less into the background of memory, and *PARADISE LOST* stood out, bold, clear, and without competitor. Nay more, the dramatic form, for which, when the subject first occurred to him, Milton had felt a preference, had been now abandoned, and it had been resolved that the poem should be an Epic. He began this epic in earnest almost certainly before Cromwell was dead: "about 2 yeares before the K[ing] came in," says Aubrey on Phillips's authority: *l.c.* in 1658, when, notwithstanding his blindness, he was still in official attendance on Cromwell at Whitehall as Latin Secretary.

Phillips's own statement, in his Memoir of his uncle, agrees with Aubrey's. He distinctly says that it was while Milton was living in the house in Petty France, Westminster, which he occupied from 1652 to within a few weeks of the Restoration,—“a pretty garden-house next door to the Lord Scudamore's, and opening into St. James's Park”—that “the heighth of his noble fancy and invention” began to be seriously and mainly employed on *Paradise Lost*. So distinct a recollection of the poem in association with the house almost implies that it had been begun a year or two before that house was left, or while Cromwell was still alive.¹

¹ The house thus rendered illustrious existed and was known till very recently as No. 19 York Street, Westminster, the old name of Petty France having been changed to York Street, in consequence of the fact that John Sharp, Archbishop of York, had had his town house here about the year 1708. Some time in the latter part of the eighteenth century Jeremy Bentham had come to be owner of the house, and he lived and died in an adjacent one; and William Hazlitt rented the house from Bentham, and lived in it from 1811 onwards. On the parapet, near

The uncertain state of affairs after Cromwell's death, or, at all events, after the resignation of his son Richard, whom Milton also served as Latin Secretary, may have interfered with the progress of the back attic-window, was a stone tablet, which had been set up by Bentham, with the inscription, "SACRED TO MILTON, PRINCE OF POETS." The garden at the back, once belonging to the house, had been encroached upon by Bentham, and added to his own, so that only a narrow piece of it remained. Some farther proposed alterations by Bentham, with a view to the use of the ground for the purposes of a "Chrestomathic School," had roused Hazlitt's indignation. What was then the *back* of the house, reckoned from York Street, was really the old part, or original *front*, the windows of which, when Milton lived in the house, seem to have looked right into St. James's Park, there being also a direct entry from the garden of the house into the Park.—So much I had learnt from Mr. Peter Cunningham's "Handbook of London" (Art. *York Street, Westminster*), and Hazlitt's *Spirit of the Age* (edit. 1825, pp. 5, 6); but I may add the impressions made by my own first visit to the house, on the afternoon of December 27, 1866. It was a dull, darkish afternoon, and, on my making my way from Birdcage Walk, through Queen's Square, into York Street, the street seemed so mean and dingy that it required an effort of fancy, or at least a recollection of the rapidity with which London streets degenerate, to persuade me that, fifty years before, a man like Hazlitt could have had his residence here. Much more was it difficult to convert in imagination that slum of the present Westminster, at the back of Wellington Barracks, into the Petty France of two centuries before, where Milton, when Latin Secretary to Cromwell, had his "pretty garden-house," and had Lord Scudamore for his next-door neighbour. With some difficulty, owing to temporary imperfections of numbering, I made out No. 19. The house looked narrow and uninviting, and the frontage to the street looked like a construction of the end of the last century or thereabouts. There was a ticket up, intimating that the lower part, consisting of a shop and back-room, was to be let; and these premises were, accordingly, vacant. But, besides the shop door, there was a small private door from the street-pavement, with two minute black bell-handles. The next house on the left had been partly taken down, leaving a kind of gap, serving for the stowage of timber; on the right was a small cook-shop. Inquiring at this cook-shop, I was told that I was quite right: the house to the left *was* No. 19, and Milton's; and, if I pulled one of the bells, I might see the landlady, who could tell me more. I pulled the upper bell; but, no one answering, I pushed the door open, and, advancing along a narrow passage, groped my way in darkness up a winding stair, which brought with it at once a conviction of an antiquity greater than that of the street-frontage. Though I saw faint gleams of one or two openings like doors on my way, I did not stop till I reached the back-attic, where I heard voices. A girl, in some consternation, but with a perception of the nature of my errand when I explained it, referred me to one of the doors lower down for the landlady's room. Groping back to this door, I found the landlady in what was evidently the principal room of the house,—a room of respectable size, and doubtless once Milton's chief sitting-room. The landlady explained to me that the different rooms of the house were now let out

the poem; and, when the Restoration came, there was danger for a time that not only the poem, but the author's life itself, might be cut short. That danger over, he was at liberty, "on evil days though fallen, and evil tongues," to prosecute his labour in obscurity and

to separate lodgers, and that she found it more difficult to let the back rooms than those to the street-front. She knew about Milton, and would have it that he composed generally in the back-attic. From the window of her own room I looked into the back-yard, and saw the wall, built by Bentham, which cut off what had once been the main part of Milton's garden. Just beyond the wall there was the top of a small conical green-leaved tree, which the landlady duly chronicled as the cotton-tree planted by Milton. Having heard of a cotton-tree, or two cotton-trees, as existing here in Hazlitt's time, I had expected something larger of the tree kind than I now saw. Beyond the tree and the wall I could not see St. James's Park, but only intervening buildings, belonging, I think, to the Barracks. After I had looked about the room a little, I descended, with the landlady as my guide, to the back-yard. It was a narrow stone-flagged space, with a water-butt in it,—so narrow that it was only by leaning back against the wall and looking upwards that I could descry Bentham's inscription to Milton, or rather the place of it, on a ledge from the back-attic. The appearance of the house at the back was better than in front, being that of a narrow, old, three-storeyed, red brick house.—Twice or thrice afterwards I visited the house again, and re-inspected its interior; and, so long as it existed, I was seldom in the neighbourhood without at least standing a moment or two opposite to it, and pointing it out to any friend that might be with me. For it was the last of Milton's many London residences then known to be extant, and certainly not the least interesting of them. Here it was that he lived when he knew and served Cromwell. Here he was first totally blind. Here his first wife died, and here the three young girls she left grew up, going from room to room in more than natural awe of their blind father. Here the second wife passed with Milton the brief period of their married life. Here, finally, it was that *Paradise Lost* was begun in earnest.—In 1875 I became aware that, in consequence of building exigencies in the York Street neighbourhood, connected with the completion of the great new fabric of family-tenements and lodging-chambers called "The Queen Ann's Mansions," the interesting house was likely to disappear. I made what appeal I could, publicly and privately, for its preservation, if that should be found possible, in some suitably repaired and readjusted form. The exigencies of building speculation were too strong for this proposal; and the house went gradually down before the pickaxe. In October 1876, on an incidental visit to London, I found only the dismantled shell still standing; and in March 1877, as I learnt, even that was swept away. For such Londoners now, therefore, as may desire more exact information respecting the site of the house than that it was in the vicinity of the St. James's Park station of the District Railway, the best direction that can be given will be to pass along the great pile of the Queen Ann Mansions and stop at that end of the pile in York Street which is furthest from Queen Square.

comparative peace. He had finished it, according to Aubrey, "about 3 years after the K's restauration," *i.e.* about 1663. If so, he had been five or six years in all engaged on the poem, and the places in which he had successively pursued the task of meditating and dictating it had been mainly these: first, Petty France, Westminster, as aforesaid, till within a few weeks of the Restoration; next, some friend's house in Bartholomew Close, West Smithfield, where he lay concealed for a while after the Restoration; then, a house in Holborn, near Red Lion Fields, whither he removed as soon as it was safe for him to do so; and, finally and more certainly, from 1661 onwards, in Jewin Street, close to that part of Aldersgate Street where he had had his house some eighteen or nineteen years before, when *Paradise Lost* first occurred to his thoughts. During the five or six years occupied in the composition of the poem in these places, it has also to be remembered, Milton's condition had been that of a widower. His first wife had died in 1652, in the house in Petty France, leaving him three daughters; his second wife, whom he had married in November 1656, while residing in the same house, had survived the marriage little more than a year; and his marriage with his third wife, Elizabeth Minshull, did not take place till February 1662-63, when, if Aubrey's account is correct, the poem was finished, or nearly so. It is certain, however, that, though Milton may have advanced far with the poem in Jewin Street before his third marriage, much had still to be done with the manuscript in the house in "Artillery Walk, leading to Bunhill Fields," to which he and his third wife removed shortly after their marriage (in 1663 or 1664), and which was the last of Milton's London residences, and that in which he died.¹ We have an interesting glimpse of the manuscript, at any rate, as in

¹ Phillips's *Memoir of Milton*, 1694. Respecting the site of this house there was an interesting note by the late Mr. Thomas Watts, of the British Museum, which is quoted in the *Addenda* to Mr. Mitford's *Life of Milton*, prefixed to Pickering's edition of Milton's Works. From the absence of the name "Artillery Walk" in the elaborate map of London published by Ogilby in 1677, within three years after Milton's death, Mr. Watts found the identification of the site rather difficult; but he concluded it to be on that side of the present Bunhill Row where Ogilby's map shows a single row of houses opposite one of the walls of the London Artillery Ground. Mr. Watts's conclusion, we may add, is confirmed by Aubrey's words. "He [Milton]," says Aubrey, "died in Bunhill, opposite to the Artillery-ground wall." Aubrey had been in the house both before Milton's death and after.

Milton's possession in a satisfactory state during the summer of 1665. As the Great Plague was then raging in London, and as the neighbourhood of Bunhill Fields was especially terrible, because of the existence there of a public pit, or burial-ground, into which the dead were thrown indiscriminately,¹ Milton had removed from his house in Artillery Walk to a cottage at Chalfont-St.-Giles, in Buckinghamshire, which had been taken for him, at his request, by his young Quaker friend Thomas Ellwood, whose acquaintance with him had begun a year or two before in Jewin Street. Visiting Milton at Chalfont as soon as circumstances would permit, Ellwood was received in a manner of which he has left an account in his Autobiography. "After some common discourses," he says, "had passed between us, "he called for a manuscript of his; which, being brought, he "delivered to me, bidding me take it home with me and read it at "my leisure, and, when I had so done, return it to him with my "judgment thereupon. When I came home, and had set myself to "read it, I found it was that excellent poem which he entituled "*Paradise Lost*." The anecdote proves the existence of at least one, and most probably of more than one, complete copy (for the author would hardly lend his only copy), in the autumn of 1665; which may, accordingly, be taken as the date when the poem was considered ready for press. The delay of publication till two years after that date is easily accounted for. It was not, says Ellwood, till "the Sickness was over, and the city well cleansed, and become "safely habitable again," that Milton returned to his house in Artillery Walk. Then, still farther paralysing business of all sorts, came the Great Fire of September 1666; and there were difficulties, as we have seen, about the licensing of a poem by a person of Milton's political antecedents.

Whether the time spent by Milton in the composition of *Paradise Lost* was five years (1658—1663) or seven or eight years (1658—

¹ This "pest-field," described vividly by Defoe in his *History of the Plague of London*, was the actual beginning of the Bunhill Fields Burying-ground, used so long as a place of interment by all Dissenters who objected to the English Burial Service. See Cunningham's *Handbook of London*, Art. *Bunhill-Fields Burying-ground*. Milton, when he removed to Artillery Walk, had not anticipated such a ghastly use of the neighbouring ground within so short a time.

² *Life of Thomas Ellwood* (originally published 1714): Reprint of 1855, p. 165.

1665), it is certain that he bestowed on the work all that care and labour which, on his first contemplation of such a work in his earlier manhood, he had declared would be necessary. The "industrious and select reading" then spoken of as one of the many requisites had not been omitted. Whatever else *Paradise Lost* may be, it is certainly one of the most *learned* poems in the world. In thinking of it in this character, we are to remember, first of all, that, before Milton's blindness had befallen him (middle of 1652), his mind was stored with an amount of various and exact learning such as few other men of his age possessed; so that, had he ceased then to acquire more, he would still have carried in his memory a vast resource of material out of which to build up the body of his poem. His memory must have been always very retentive; and it is probable that his blindness increased its powers. But he did not, after his blindness, cease to add to his knowledge by reading. At the very time when he was engaged on his *Paradise Lost*, he had several other great undertakings in progress, for which daily reading and research were necessary, even if they could have been dispensed with for the poem. He was engaged in the construction of a Body of Divinity from the Scriptures, in the completion of a History of Britain, and in the collection of materials for a new Dictionary of the Latin tongue. For works like these, as will be evident from their very nature, daily readings and researches were indispensable. It would not be difficult to prove, however, that among the labours undertaken specially for the purposes of *Paradise Lost* while it was in progress must have been readings in certain books of geography and Eastern travel, and in certain Rabbinical, early Christian, and mediæval commentators on the subjects of Paradise, the Angels, and the Fall. Nothing is more striking in the poem, nothing more touching, than the frequency, and, on the whole, the wonderful accuracy, of its references to maps. Now, whatever wealth of geographical information Milton may have carried with him into his blindness, there are evidences, I think, that he must have refreshed his recollections of this kind after his sight was gone. There are evidences in the poem itself; and, if external evidence were needed, it might be found in one of his letters to his young foreign friend, Peter Heimbach, dated Nov. 8, 1656. Here he thanks Heimbach for sending him information which he had desired as to the price of a great Atlas, requests further information as to the size of the work, and as to the comparative accuracy of two

editions of it, and jests rather mournfully on the apparent absurdity of the fact that a blind man should be so anxious to obtain a set of maps, and willing to give so much for them.¹ In another letter, also to a foreign friend (March 24, 1656-57), there are inquiries about copies of some volumes of the Byzantine Historians which he wants for his library.² In short, for *Paradise Lost*, as well as for the prose labours carried on along with it, there must have been abundance of reading; and, remembering to what a stock of prior learning, possessed before his blindness, all such increments were added, we need have no wonder at the appearance now presented by the poem. To say merely that it is a most learned poem, the poem of a mind full of miscellaneous lore wherewith a grand imaginative faculty might work, is not enough. Original as the poem is, original in its entire conception, and in every portion and passage, it is yet full of *flakes*,—we can express it no otherwise,—full of flakes from all that is greatest in preceding literature, ancient or modern. This is what all the commentators have observed, and what their labours in collecting parallel passages from other poets and prose-writers have served more and more to illustrate. Trivial as have been the results of those labours in many cases,—certain as it is that often, where a parallelism has been produced by Hume, Newton, Todd, or others, Milton can have had no thought of such a thing,—it is yet true that he must often have knowingly recalled a passage or passages of previous authorship, and fused them into his own language. In the first place, *Paradise Lost* is permeated from beginning to end with citations from the Bible. Milton must have had the Bible almost entirely by heart. Not only are some passages of his poem, where he is keeping close to the Bible as his authority, intentional coagulations of dispersed Scriptural texts; but it is possible again and again, throughout the rest, to detect the flash, through his noblest language, of some suggestion from the Psalms, the Prophets, the Gospels, or the Apocalypse. So, though in a less degree, with Homer, the Greek Tragedians (among whom Euripides was a special favourite of his), Plato, Demosthenes, and the Greek classics generally. So with Lucretius, Cicero, Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Juvenal, Persius, and the other Latins. So with the Italian writers whom he knew so well,—Dante, Petrarch, Ariosto, Tasso, and others now less remembered.

¹ *Epistolæ Familiares*, printed 1674.

² *Epist. Fam.* "Emérico Bigotio."

So with modern Latinists of various European countries, still less recoverable. Finally, so with the whole series of preceding English poets,—particularly Spenser, Shakespeare, and some of the minor Spenserians of the reigns of James and Charles I., that quaint popular favourite of his boyhood, Sylvester's *Du Bartas*, not forgotten. In connexion with all which, or with any particularly striking instance of the use by Milton of a thought or a phrase from previous authors, let the reader remember his own definition of plagiarism, given in his *Εἰκονοκλάστης*. "Such kind of borrowing as this," he there says, "*if it be not bettered by the borrower*, among good authors is accounted plagiarious." And again, of quotations from the Bible, he says: "It is not hard for any man who hath a Bible in his hands to borrow good words and holy sayings in abundance; but to make them his own is a work of grace only from above."

But how was Milton able to obtain *his* "borrowings," which *he* had such grace to make his own? How, in his blind condition, was he able to make, from day to day, those new researches,—consultations of various books and references to maps included,—which were necessary, as we have seen, to the progress of his *Paradise Lost*, as well as to the other labours and studies which he carried on at the same time? This question will be best answered by producing the most authentic accounts left to us of Milton's habits and methods of study, and his household ways generally, in the later period of his life, after he had been for a good many years totally blind. Some information on this subject has already been given in our General Memoir of Milton; but it will be proper, in the present connexion, to repeat the information in the more minute and exact form necessary for a complete conception of the blind poet's methods of gradual progress with his great epic.

Aubrey's Account :—"He was an early riser, *sc.* at 4 o'clock *manè*; yea, after he lost his sight. He had a man read to him. The first thing that he read was the Hebrew Bible, and that was at 4h. *manè* ½h. [from four o'clock to half-past four?]: then he contemplated. At 7 his man came to him again, and then read to him and wrote till dinner [till about 12 o'clock?]. The writing was as much as the reading. His 2nd [3rd] daughter, Deborah, could read to him Latin, Ital., and French, and Greek. . . . After dinner he used to walk three or four hours at a time (he always had a garden where he lived); went to bed about 9. Temperate; rarely drank between

“ meals. Extreme pleasant in his conversation, and at dinner, supper, &c. ; but satirical. . . . He had an organ in his house ; he played on that most. His exercise was chiefly walking. . . . His familiar learned acquaintances were Mr. Andrew Marvel, Mr. Skinner, Dr. Paget, M.D.”¹

Phillips's Account.:—“ He was frequently visited [in his house in Petty France] by persons of quality, particularly my lady Ranelagh, whose son for some time he instructed ; all learned foreigners of note, who could not pass out of the city without giving a visit to a person so eminent ; and, lastly, by particular friends that had a high esteem for him,—viz. Mr. Andrew Marvel ; young Lawrence (the son of him that was president of Oliver's Council), to whom there is a sonnet among the rest in his printed poems ; Mr. Marchamont Needham, the writer of *Politicus* ; but, above all, Mr. Cyriack Skinner, whom he honoured with two sonnets. . . . Those [daughters] he had by his first [wife], he made servicable to him in that very particular in which he most wanted their service, and supplied his want of eyesight by their eyes and tongue ; for, though he had daily about him one or other to read to him,—some, persons of man's estate, who of their own accord greedily caught at the opportunity of being his readers, that they might as well reap the benefit of what they read to him as oblige him by the benefit of their reading ; others, of younger years, sent by their parents to the same end,—yet, excusing only the eldest daughter by reason of her bodily infirmity and difficult utterance of speech (which, to say truth, I doubt, was the principal cause of excusing her), the other two were condemned to the performance of reading and exactly pronouncing of all the languages of whatever book he should at one time or other think fit to peruse,—viz. the Hebrew (and, I think, the Syriac), the Greek, the Latin, the Italian, Spanish, and French. All which sorts of books to be confined to read without understanding one word must needs be a trial of patience almost beyond endurance ; yet it was endured by both for a time. . . . There [in Jewin-street] he lived when he married his third wife,

¹ Aubrey's *Lives*, published 1813, from the MS. notes in the Bodleian. These notes were written about 1680, and sent to Anthony Wood at Oxford. Aubrey had known Milton personally, and collected particulars about him from his widow, his nephew Edward Phillips, his brother Christopher Milton, and other persons.

“recommended to him by his old friend, Dr. Paget in Coleman Street.”¹

The Quaker Ellwood's Recollection of his First Acquaintance with Milton in 1662.—“I mentioned before that, when I was a boy, I had made some progress in learning, and lost it all again before I came to be a man; nor was I rightly sensible of my loss therein till I came amongst the Quakers. But then I both saw my loss and lamented it, and applied myself with utmost diligence, at all leisure times, to recover it; so false I found that charge to be which in those times was cast as a reproach upon the Quakers, that they despised and denied all human learning. . . . But, though I toiled hard, and spared no pains to regain what once I had been master of, yet I found it a matter of so great difficulty that I was ready to say, as the noble eunuch to Philip in another case, ‘How can I, unless I had some man to guide me?’ ‘This I had formerly complained of to my especial friend Isaac Pennington, but now more earnestly; which put him upon considering, and contriving a means for my assistance. He had an intimate acquaintance with Dr. Paget, a physician of note in London, and he with John Milton, a gentleman of great note for learning throughout the learned world, for the accurate pieces he had written on various subjects and occasions. This person, having filled a public station in the former times, lived now a private and retired life in London; and, having wholly lost his sight, kept always a man to read to him,—usually the son of some gentleman of his acquaintance, whom, in kindness, he took to improve in his learning. Thus, by the mediation of my friend Isaac Pennington with Dr. Paget, and of Dr. Paget with John Milton, was I admitted to come to him: not as a servant of his (which at that time he needed not), nor to be in the house with him, but only to have the liberty of coming to his house at certain hours when I could, and to read to him what books he should appoint me; which was all the favour I desired. But, this being a matter which would require some time to bring it about, I, in the mean time, returned to my father's house in Oxfordshire. . . . Understanding that the mediation used for my admittance to John Milton had succeeded so well that I might come when I could, I hastened to London, and in the first place went to wait upon him.

¹ Phillips's Memoir of Milton, prefixed to the English Edition of *Letters of State*, 1694.

“ He received me courteously, as well for the sake of Dr. Paget, who
“ introduced me, as of Isaac Pennington, who recommended me ; to
“ both of whom he bore a good respect. And, having inquired divers
“ things of me with respect to my former progression in learning, he
“ dismissed me, to provide myself of such accommodation as might
“ be most suitable to my future studies. I went, therefore, and took
“ myself a lodging as near his house, which was then in Jewin Street,
“ as conveniently I could ; and from thenceforward went every day
“ in the forenoon, except on the first days of the week, and, sitting
“ by him in his dining-room, read to him in such books in the Latin
“ tongue as he pleased to hear me read. At my first sitting to read
“ to him, observing that I used the English pronunciation, he told
“ me, if I would have the benefit of the Latin tongue, not only to
“ read and understand Latin authors, but to converse with foreigners
“ either abroad or at home, I must learn the foreign pronunciation.
“ To this I consenting, he instructed me how to sound the vowels. . . .
“ But this change of pronunciation proved a new difficulty to me. . . .
“ He, on the other hand, perceiving with what earnest desire I
“ pursued learning, gave me not only all the encouragement, but all
“ the help, he could. For, having a curious ear, he understood by
“ my tone when I understood what I read, and when I did not ; and
“ accordingly would stop me, examine me, and open the most diffi-
“ cult passages to me. Thus went I on for about six weeks’ time,
“ reading to him in the afternoons.”¹

Bishop Newton’s Account :—“ In his way of living he was an
“ example of sobriety and temperance. He was very sparing in the
“ use of wine or strong liquors of any kind. . . . He was likewise
“ very abstemious in his diet, not fastidiously nice or delicate in his
“ choice of dishes, but content with anything that was most in season,
“ or easiest to be procured ; eating and drinking (according to the
“ distinction of the philosopher) that he might live, and not living
“ that he might eat or drink. So that probably his gout descended
“ by inheritance from one or other of his parents ; or, if it was of his
“ own acquiring, it must have been owing to his studious and seden-
“ tary life. . . . In his youth he was accustomed to sit up late at his
“ studies, and seldom went to bed before midnight ; but afterwards,
“ finding it to be the ruin of his eyes, and looking upon this custom

¹ Life of Thomas Ellwood, Reprint of 1855, pp. 109—113. Ellwood was about twenty-two years of age at the time to which the extract refers.

“ as very pernicious to health at any time, he used to go to rest early, “ seldom later than nine, and would be stirring in the summer at four, “ and in the winter at five, in the morning¹ but, if he was not “ disposed to rise at his usual hours, he still did not lie sleeping, but “ had somebody or other by his bedside to read to him. At his first “ rising he had usually a chapter read to him out of the Hebrew “ Bible, and he commonly studied all the morning till twelve; then “ used some exercise for an hour, afterwards dined, and after dinner “ played on the organ, and either sung himself or made his wife [the “ third] sing, who, he said, had a good voice, but no ear; and then “ he went up to study again till six, when his friends came to visit him “ and sat with him perhaps till eight; then he went down to supper, “ which was usually olives or some light thing, and after supper “ he smoked his pipe and drank a glass of water, and went to bed.”¹

The substance of this information may be thus summed up:— Milton, in his time of total blindness, was as laborious and systematic a student as he had been before, and had his day as regularly distributed into portions for different kinds of work and relaxation. In his readings and literary researches he availed himself of every variety of assistance. In the first place, among the learned friends of some social standing who were in the habit of dropping in upon him, there were, doubtless, some whom he might depend upon for an occasional hour's help, or ask, during a call, to take down a volume for him from his book-shelves. There must have been not a few such friends, but we hear particularly of these five: Dr. Paget of Coleman Street; Andrew Marvell, M.P. for Hull after the Restoration, when he was forty years of age; Marchmont Needham, the political writer, of about the same age as Marvell; “ young Lawrence,” the son of that better-known Henry Lawrence who had been one of Cromwell's most faithful adherents and was President of his Council from 1654 to 1657; and Cyriack Skinner, an “ ingenious young gentleman ” of good family, who had formerly been Milton's pupil, and who, in 1659, had been a member, and sometimes chairman, of Harrington's Republican club, called *The Rota*.² To this list may perhaps be added

¹ Newton's *Life of Milton*, prefixed to his edition of Milton's *Poetical Works*, edit. 1761, pp. lxvi. lxvii. Newton's account of Milton's habits is evidently in part derived from Aubrey and Phillips, but, as it includes one or two interesting particulars which he had picked up elsewhere, I have added it.

² Wood's *Athenae*, by Bliss, iii. 1119.

the Samuel Barrow, M.D., who wrote the Latin Commendatory Verses prefixed, along with Marvell's English ones, to the second Edition of *Paradise Lost*. But, whatever occasional help Milton may have received from such friends, it is clear that he had regular help of an independent kind. "He had daily about him," Phillips tells us, "one or other to read to him"; and Phillips farther explains this by adding that there were "persons of man's estate" who "greedily caught at the opportunity" of being allowed to read to Milton, accounting it a benefit to themselves, and that in other cases parents were eager to obtain the benefit for their sons. That there was even a competition for the honour appears from Ellwood's account of the manner in which *he* came to share in it. The young Quaker was, doubtless, only one of many volunteers who were at Milton's service and whom he used by turns. That he had, however, some one paid attendant always or generally about him, would be likely from the very nature of the case, even did Aubrey not speak of "his man" who read to him in the mornings. Add to all this the help he could command from the members of his own household. From the time when *Paradise Lost* was commenced till the time when it was finished, and for some years longer, Milton had his three daughters under the same roof with himself; and Phillips, their cousin, speaks almost with pity of the drill to which two of these girls were subjected. The eldest escaped only because she was an invalid and had a defect in her speech: she was lame and somewhat deformed, as we learn elsewhere; but the other two had been trained to read aloud books in at least six languages, without themselves understanding a word of what they read. They may have had some relief, as far as English books were concerned, though not in the way most agreeable to them, when Milton (Feb. 1662-63) married his third wife, Elizabeth Minshull, who, at the time of her marriage with Milton, was but in the twenty-fifth year of her age, or about eight years older than her eldest step-daughter. There is evidence that this wife was extremely attentive to Milton and quite capable of reading to him in English. Lastly, both before and after this marriage, Milton had valuable literary help in the visits, whenever they were possible, of his nephew Edward Phillips, whom he had himself brought up and grounded in his boyhood in all kinds of scholarship according to a system of his own. Phillips had since then been at Oxford, and, after leaving Oxford, had settled in London as what we should now call a hack-

author,—editing the Poems of Drummond of Hawthornden (1656), translating romances from the Spanish (1656), compiling a new Dictionary of English words (1657), and latterly continuing Sir Richard Baker's popular Chronicle of English History (1659). In every respect Phillips, whose age was about eight-and-twenty at the date of the last publication, was the very man to be of use to his uncle in literary researches; and, during the whole time of the composition of *Paradise Lost*, he was in the habit of seeing his uncle at short intervals: at all events, till Oct. 1663, when he went to be tutor to one of the sons of John Evelyn, and may thus have been less within reach.—But what of that other nephew of Milton's,—John Phillips, the brother of Edward, and about a year younger,—whom we should have expected to find in similar relations to his uncle about this period? This younger nephew had also been brought up and educated in his boyhood by Milton, and he had been even more closely associated than his elder brother with some parts of Milton's career. Thus, in 1652, when the elder nephew was at Oxford, it was this younger nephew, then apparently still with his uncle in London, that wrote and published, under his uncle's superintendence, a Latin reply to an anonymous attack that had been made on his uncle's famous *Defensio pro Populo Anglicano*. The reply, though now printed among Milton's works, is entitled *Joannis Philippi, Angli, Responsio ad Apologiam Anonymi cujusdam*. But after that time John Phillips had diverged from his uncle. Like his brother Edward, he had betaken himself to literature; but his style of literature can hardly have met with Milton's approbation. His first known English work had been a coarse Anti-Puritanical poem, published in 1655, with the title *A Satyr against Hypocrites*; and in the following year, 1656, I have found evidence of his having been reported to Cromwell's Council of State, while his uncle was still in his Secretaryship to Cromwell and that Council, for concern in another publication, containing, in the opinion of the Council, so much "scandalous, lascivious, scurrilous, and profane matter" that they ordered all copies of it to be called in and burnt. Neither of the brothers permanently retained Milton's principles, but Edward seems to have remained the more loyal to him personally. John may have visited him during the composition of *Paradise Lost*; but we have not the same evidence of this as we have in the case of Edward.¹

¹ About the two Phillipses see Wood's *Athenæ*, by Bliss, iv. 759—769; also

Amid such assistance in his blindness we are to conceive Milton not only carrying on his Dictionary of the Latin tongue, his compilation of a History of England to the Conquest, his construction of a system of Divinity from the Bible, and other prose-labours, but also slowly building up, for five or seven years, his great epic. As he required other eyes to *read* for him, and to provide him the new material from books which he ruminated for his various purposes, so whatever he composed had to be *written* for him by other hands. His mode of composition, or of committing to paper what he had previously composed in his mind, was that of dictation. Those who served him as readers, or some of them, must also have served him as amanuenses. It has been the fond fancy of the public, fostered by artists and illustrators of Milton's poetry, that it was chiefly or exclusively Milton's three daughters, Anne, Mary, and Deborah, that served him in this capacity in the composition of his *Paradise Lost*. Most of us have seen flummery pictures and engravings representing the blind poet, in a rapt and ecstatic attitude, dictating his sublime epic, in a beautiful trellised arbour, or in an arched Gothic library, to his attentive and revering daughters. Alas! the imagination so suggested little corresponds with the reality. Phillips expressly tells us that it was only the two younger daughters that assisted Milton as readers, and that the eldest was unfit for this service, because of her bodily infirmity. We know, independently, that this eldest daughter, Anne Milton, could not write.¹ The other two daughters, Mary and Deborah, *could* write, and may, on occasion, have assisted their father as amanuenses, besides helping him so largely as readers.² That they

Godwin's *Lives of Edward and John Phillips*, 1815. Part of my information about John Phillips is from the preserved Minutes of Oliver's Council.

¹ She signs by her mark, and a rather clumsy one, to the Release, dated Feb. 24, 1674-5, for her portion of her father's estate, after his death (facsimile in Mr. Marsh's *Milton Papers*, and in Mr. S. Leigh Sotheby's *Ramblings*, p. 176). She was then twenty-eight years of age.

² There is a specimen of Mary's writing in her signature, at the age of twenty-six, to the Release, dated Feb. 22, 1674-5, for her portion of her father's estate (facsimile in Mr. Marsh's *Milton Papers*, and in Mr. S. Leigh Sotheby's *Ramblings*, p. 177). The handwriting is rather stiff, and she spells her name "Milton," with two *ts*.—Deborah's signature is attached to a corresponding document from her, dated March 27, 1675, when she was nearly twenty-three years of age (facsimile in Mr. Marsh's *Milton Papers*, and in Mr. S. Leigh Sotheby's *Ramblings*, p. 179). It has more character than her sister Mary's, and is not inelegant; but she spells her name "Deboroh," with an *o* for an *a*.

were, in any especial sense, however, the amanuenses to whom Milton dictated his *Paradise Lost*, or any considerable portion of it, admits of great doubt. At all events, the common pictures and engravings, representing the blind Milton dictating *Paradise Lost* to his admiring daughters, are quite untrue to the actual relations between father and daughters at the time when the poem was written. Even in this Introduction to the poem it is right that some account of these should be given. It may not be without use that the student of the poem should have an exact idea of even the less pleasant domestic surroundings amid which it was shaped, meditated from day to day, and gradually completed in the mind of its blind author.

Milton, as we have seen, began the poem in 1658, when he was fifty years of age. He was then a widower for the second time. His first wife, Mary Powell, from Forest Hill, Oxfordshire,—to whom he had been married about ten years, and his relations with whom and her family had from the first been the reverse of happy,—had died in 1652, just about the time when his blindness became total. She had left him the three daughters: Anne, about seven years of age; Mary, about five; and Deborah, a mere infant. What attention the blind father, engrossed with his public and official, or private and intellectual, labours, could give to the poor, motherless children, living in the same house with him in Petty France, may easily be imagined. It was probably a fortunate thing for them when he brought into the house (Nov. 1656) his second wife,—that Catharine Woodcock of Hackney who seems really to have been worthy of his love, and who is the “late espoused saint” of one of his best-known sonnets. But, after little more than a year (Feb. 1657-8), this wife, whom he had never seen with bodily eyes, had also died,—the time of her death coinciding very nearly with that fixed as the commencement of *Paradise Lost*. The three daughters of the first wife, again left to their blind father’s care and to that of servants, were now, respectively, twelve, ten, and six years of age. They continued to live with their father during the rest of his stay in Petty France (*i.e.* till 1660); and, after his brief period of hiding at the Restoration, we are to fancy them again with him in the house which he had in Holborn, near Red Lion Fields (1660-1661), and then in that in Jewin Street, which he occupied for a year or two (1661-1663-4), and where the young Quaker Ellwood was first introduced to him. It must have been during this period of five years, spent mainly in the three houses

mentioned,—the eldest daughter advancing meanwhile from her thirteenth to her eighteenth year, the second from her eleventh year to her sixteenth, and the youngest from her seventh year to her twelfth,—that Milton, besides having a governess in to teach them less or more, subjected the two younger to that peculiar drill which enabled him to have their services as readers in languages which they did not understand. It is evident that Phillips, who must have seen the process in operation, thinks it was overdone. "It must needs," he says, in the extract already made from him, "be a trial of patience almost beyond endurance: yet it was endured by both for a time." These last words certainly imply that the two girls continued the labour after the third marriage of their father, in Feb. 1662-3, with Elizabeth Minshull, and into the house in Artillery Walk, Bunhill, to which he removed shortly after that marriage. The services of Deborah, at any rate, who was not quite eleven years old at the time of this marriage, must have been mainly subsequent to it. Accordingly, it was in the house in Artillery Walk, and probably after the three girls had been five or six years there under the same roof with their new stepmother, that the catastrophe came which Phillips thus records: "Yet the unpleasantness of this employment could not always be concealed, but broke out more and more into expressions of uncasiness; so that at length they were all (even the eldest also) sent out to learn some curious and ingenious sorts of manufacture that are proper for women to learn, particularly embroideries in gold and silver." If this first sending out of the daughters to learn some ways of earning their own living coincides with the time of their leaving their father's house finally, and ceasing to have any but the most incidental communication with him,—an event which, we know independently, did occur "four or five years" before Milton's death,—then the date is 1669 or 1670, and *Paradise Lost* had been not only completed, but published, while the girls were still under their father's roof. In 1669 Anne was twenty-three years of age, Mary twenty-one, and Deborah seventeen. One can imagine that girls of those ages, themselves imperfectly cultivated, might come to rebel at last against a drudgery to which they had long submitted, and the rather because there was added to the drudgery the sense of the control of a stepmother, not so much older than themselves as to be easily venerable. On the other hand, there is evidence, of a sadly authentic nature, that Milton thought he had more to complain of in

his daughters than any mere repugnance to the drudgery of reading for him, or inability to agree with their stepmother. A few months before his death, *i.e.* in July 1674, his daughters having then been four or five years apart from him, he made this solemn declaration as to the mode in which he wished his property to be disposed of: "The portion due to me from Mr. Powell, my former [first] wife's father, I leave to the unkind children I had by her, having received no part of it but my meaning is, they shall have no other benefit of my estate than the said portion, and what I have besides done for them: they having been very undutiful to me. All the residue of my estate I leave to disposal of Elizabeth, my loving wife." This declaration was made, in the house in Artillery Walk, to Milton's brother, Christopher Milton, then a bencher of the Inner Temple (afterwards Sir Christopher Milton, and a judge), the occasion being a visit of Christopher to his brother to take leave of him before going to Ipswich for his usual autumn vacation. After Milton's death, Christopher, believing that his brother had intended him to take the foregoing as his "nuncupative" or word-of-mouth will, in case they should not meet again, did draw it up on paper in the interest of the widow. The daughters contested it; and the records of the proceedings are still extant, including the examinations of Christopher Milton, and of two sisters, Mary Fisher and Elizabeth Fisher, who had been in Milton's service in the last year of his life. From their testimonies it appeared that the unpaid marriage portion of Milton's wife, which he had left to his three daughters, amounted to £1000, besides interest on the same for about twenty years, and that the members of the Powell family, from whom the money was to come, were well able to pay it, and were under instructions to do so by the first Mr. Powell's will. If this was true, then £1000 and twenty years' interest would not have been an unfair provision for the daughters, after what Milton had "besides done for them": by which seems to be meant the expense he had been at in getting them taught embroidery in gold and silver, etc., and perhaps in boarding them for some time while they were learning those arts after they had left his house. For the estimated value of the whole residue that would come to the widow was £1000; or, if it exceeded that sum, then,—as the widow had informed Christopher Milton, though he had heard nothing of it from the deceased himself,—Milton had privately expressed a wish to her that she should give the overplus to Chris-

topher Milton's children. It also came out in the evidence of all the three witnesses that Milton had often spoken of the undutifulness of his children. "As touching deceased's displeasure with them," was their uncle Christopher's evidence, "he only heard him say, at the time of declaring his will, that they were undutiful and unkind to him, not expressing any particulars; but in former times he hath heard him complain that they were careless of him being blind, and made nothing of deserting him." Elizabeth Fisher's evidence, given apparently without any acrimony, contains a passage more startling. "This respondent hath heard the deceased declare his displeasure against the parties ministrant, his children; and, particularly, the deceased declared to this respondent that, a little before he was married to Elizabeth Milton, his now relict, a former maid-servant of his told Mary, one of the deceased's daughters, and one of the ministrants, that she heard the deceased was to be married; to which the said Mary replied to the said maid-servant that that was no news, to hear of his wedding, but, if she could hear of his death, that was something: and [deceased] further told this respondent that all his said children did combine together and counsel his maid-servant to cheat him, the deceased, in her marketings, and that his said children had made away some of his books, and would have sold the rest of his books to the dunghill-women." This is too terrible. It carries us back, it will be noted, to the period before Milton's third marriage and the residence in Artillery Walk, and gives us a glimpse of the state of things in that house in Jewin Street where Milton resided between 1661 and 1663, and where probably a large portion of *Paradise Lost* grew into completion. We see the blind man in his chamber there, meditating his lofty theme, and his three daughters, when they were not with him, gadding with the servants below, and left to their own devices. Is it to be wondered at that Milton's old friend, Dr. Paget of Coleman Street, thought he was doing a service to him, and to the girls too, when he recommended to him a third wife in the person of the careful, tidy, kindly, still young, and apparently not unhand-some Elizabeth Minshull, from the neighbourhood of Nantwich in Cheshire? She was Dr. Paget's own kinswoman, it seems; but it was a service. However difficult it may have been for the daughters, such as they were, to get on with her, she was a thoroughly conscientious wife to Milton, and to her was owing the comparative

comfort of his later years. Nor must we forget the excuse there was for the daughters themselves. They had grown up, young motherless children, under the charge of a noble but austere father, less considerate of their peculiar wants than he ought to have been even in his blindness, and the best of whose theories in any case was perhaps not that which he entertained respecting the proper training for girls. In behalf of at least one of them, also, the date of that miserable state of things of which we have a glimpse in Jewin Street has to be recollected. Anne, the eldest daughter, was over sixteen years of age at the time, and therefore responsible, Mary, of whom the worst story is told, was over fourteen; but Deborah, the youngest, was scarcely eleven, and therefore wholly at the bidding of her sisters. One would fain exempt this youngest daughter,—who was, we are told, her father's favourite, and who lived to speak of him with fond enthusiasm when she was an old woman, and people visited her on his account,—from the charge of positive undutifulness to him in his lifetime.¹

¹ The reader may like to have, in a note, a more detailed summary than that given in our General Memoir of what is known of the subsequent histories of Milton's widow and his three daughters. The following is the best condensation of particulars I can make from Aubrey, Phillips, Toland, the Nuncupative Will proceedings, Birch, Newton, Todd, Mr. Marsh's *Milton's Papers*, Mr. Hunter's *Milton Gleanings*, an Article in the *Edinburgh Review*, No. 50, and other sources:—THE WIDOW. She was not quite thirty-six years of age at her husband's death. The issue of her suit in the matter of Milton's nuncupative will was that the will was set aside by the Court, not on account of any discredit of the evidence, but because all the formalities required in nuncupative wills had not been complied with. Instead of a probate of the will, the widow therefore received (Feb. 25, 1674-5) administration of all her late husband's property and rights in the ordinary way. By custom, she was entitled herself to two-thirds, one-third as widow, and one-third as administratrix,—the remaining third being due to the daughters. She seems to have been prompt and considerate in settling matters according to this arrangement. Before the letter of administration was granted, she had given security to the two elder daughters for the payment to each of £100, to be invested for their benefit in life-annuities, under the care of their uncles, Christopher Milton and Richard Powell: taking the release of the two daughters for the same, as, with one specified exception, a full discharge of all their claims. By the 27th of March following, she had handed over to the youngest daughter her £100, together with "several goods": taking her release and her husband's for all their claims, with one exception. The exception in each case seems to have related to the possibility of the subsequent coming-in of debts to Milton not yet realised,—the marriage-portion of £1000 from the Powells, for example; in which case the daughters reserved a right beyond the

We are now prepared to understand how far Milton's daughters are likely to have been the amanuenses to whom he dictated his £100. On the assumption, however, that £100 was the just share of each of the daughters in the existing property, the total value of that property was £900, and the widow's share £600. On this, with whatever else she had of her own, the widow lived in London, and probably in the house near Bunhill Fields, for some years longer. Aubrey continued to visit her, and obtained from her some of the most interesting particulars about Milton preserved in his notes. He describes her, from this acquaintance with her, as "a gent. person, a peacefull and agreeable humour." In December 1680, as we have seen (*ante*, p. 19), she received from Samuel Simmons, the original publisher of *Paradise Lost*, eight pounds, as Simmons's discharge in full of all remaining claims upon him on account of the book; and in April 1681 (*ante*, p. 20), she gave Simmons a still more comprehensive release to the same effect. About this time, being then forty-two or forty-three years of age, she seems to have made up her mind to leave London, and return to her native county of Cheshire. There is a legal document, of date June 1680, by which it appears that she was then negotiating, through her brother, Richard Minshall, framework-knitter, of Wisterton, near Nantwich, Cheshire, for the lease of a house, etc., in his neighbourhood. Accordingly, she removed to Nantwich; where, amid her relations and old acquaintances, she lived a frugal, if not somewhat pinched, but eminently pious and respectable life, till as late as the autumn of 1727, when she died at the age of eighty-nine years. Her widowhood had thus extended over the unusually long period of fifty-three years. Few persons seem to have inquired after her, Nantwich being so far out of the world. Phillips, writing in 1694, mentions her only as "said to be yet living." Toland, when preparing his *Memoir of Milton*, in 1698, caused a friend to write to her for information, and a letter from her was received in reply. Bishop Newton had received later accounts of her, which he incorporated in his *Life of Milton*, written in 1749. When talked with, she confirmed the usual stories of Milton's habits; but, "being asked whether he did not often read Homer and Virgil, she understood it as an imputation upon him for stealing from those authors, and answered "with eagerness that he stole from nobody but the Muse who inspired him; and, "being asked by a lady present who the Muse was, replied it was God's "grace, and the Holy Spirit that visited him nightly." Newton had also heard (Note, in Newton's *Milton*, to *Par. Lost* IV. 305) that her hair had been originally of a golden hue. There is evidence that at Nantwich she was member of a Baptist congregation; and it is possible, though not proved, that she was the Elizabeth Milton at whose death a funeral sermon was preached by the Rev. Isaac Kimber, Baptist minister in Nantwich. In a printed volume of Kimber's Sermons, edited by his son in 1756, it is positively stated that she was; but, if so, a wrong date is there given to the sermon. There is no allusion to Milton in the sermon, to settle the point. Her will, dated August 22, 1727, provided that any overplus of her effects, after payment of her just debts and her funeral expenses, should go to her nephews and nieces in Nantwich. She must have died before the 10th of October following; on which day the will was proved. Her estate was sworn at under £40; so that, if she had other property when alive, it must

Paradise Lost. All the three daughters were with him, so far as appears, during the entire time of the composition of the poem : in

have been in the form of life-interest merely. It is interesting to know, from the minute inventory of her effects at death (a Notice of which, by Mr. J. F. Marsh, appeared in vol. vii. of the Proceedings of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire), that she retained to the last the relics of her husband which she had brought with her from London, including not only the silver seal, mentioned *ante*, p. 10, but also two portraits of Milton, one as a boy of ten, the other as a youth of one-and-twenty, which had hung in Milton's own parlour in his lifetime. These two portraits were sold by her executors. The first was sold for twenty guineas, and its history can be traced with perfect accuracy down to a few years ago, when it was in the possession of Edgar Disney, Esq., of The Hyde, Ingatestone, Essex. The other was bought from the widow's executors by the Right Hon. Arthur Onslow, Speaker of the House of Commons ; it was often engraved in the last century by Vertue and others ; and it remained in the possession of the Onslow family till 1828, when, unfortunately, the late Earl of Onslow parted with it : since which time it has been lost sight of. It may yet be recovered, and there would be no difficulty in identifying it.—THE THREE DAUGHTERS :—The eldest daughter, Anne Milton, who, though lame and with a defect in her speech, is said to have had a "very handsome face," was twenty-eight years of age at the time of her father's death. According to the evidence of Elizabeth Fisher in the matter of Milton's will, she had then a trade by which she could live, "which is the making of gold and silver lace, and which the deceased bred her up to." With this, and with the £100 which came to her as her share of her father's effects, she lived on in London till her marriage (date unknown) with a person described as "a master-builder." She died in giving birth to her first child, which died with her.—Mary Milton, the second daughter, and, according to Aubrey, more like her mother than her father, was twenty-six years of age when her father died. She never married, and was dead before 1694.—The youngest daughter, Deborah Milton, "very like her father," according to Aubrey, was twenty-two years of age at her father's death, having been born in the house in Petty France, May 2, 1652. At the time of her father's death she was in Ireland, having gone thither as companion to a lady named Merian. Shortly after her father's death, she married an Abraham Clarke, of the city of Dublin, described as "a weaver" : "a mercer, sells silk," is Aubrey's addition. Accordingly, in her release to her stepmother for her £100, dated March 27, 1675, she signs her name "Deborah Clarke," and her husband signs the document jointly with herself. After remaining in Dublin for a good many years, her husband and she came over to London, where her husband is thenceforward heard of as "a weaver in Spitalfields." She survived till August 27, 1727, when she died at the age of seventy-five. In her later years she was visited by many persons for her father's sake ; among whom were Addison, the engraver Vertue, and Professor Ward of Gresham College. Vertue consulted her as to her father's portraits, and obtained exact and useful information from her on that subject. Addison was struck by her resemblance to her father in the Faithorne portrait, and in others derived thence. She spoke to him and others of her father with becoming

Petty France, Westminster; then in Holborn; then in Jewin Street; and, lastly, in Artillery Walk, Bunhill Fields. They *might*, therefore,

enthusiasm, and with a rush of fondness as she looked at the portrait of him which she thought likeliest; and she impressed them as "a woman of good understanding and genteel behaviour, though in low circumstances." She told Mr. Ward that "she and her sisters used to read to their father in eight languages, which, by practice, they were capable of doing with great readiness and accuracy, though they understood what they read in no other language but English; and their father used often to say in their hearing that one tongue was enough for a woman. None of them were ever sent to school, but all taught at home by a mistress kept for that purpose." Addison, Mr. Ward, and others, received a singular corroboration of this story, by hearing her repeat, even after such a distance of time, passages from the beginning of Homer and some verses of Euripides in Greek, and a little of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in Latin. On Addison's recommendation, the Princess of Wales, afterwards Queen Caroline, had, in or about 1719, sent her a present of fifty guineas; and, just before her death, there was a larger general subscription on her behalf. It may be taken as a sign of her affection for her father that, along with her £100 in 1675, she had secured "several goods" that had belonged to him: among which was the second silver seal, mentioned *ante*, p. 10, and also a Bible that had belonged to her mother, and on a blank leaf of which Milton had entered the births of his children. Through her alone, at all events, was the poet's lineage continued for more than one generation. Besides six sons* and two daughters, who had all died young, and without issue, she had a son, Caleb Clarke, and a daughter, Elizabeth. This Elizabeth Clarke married a Thomas Foster, described also as "a Spitalfields weaver." She was living, in 1738, in Pelham Street, Spitalfields, but afterwards kept a small chandler's shop in Lower Holloway; whence she removed, in 1748 or 1749, to Cock Lane, near Shoreditch Church. She lived till May 9, 1754, and, like her mother, was much visited by persons of note on Milton's account, and, among them, by two of Milton's biographers, Dr. Birch and Dr. (afterwards Bishop) Newton. To Dr. Birch, whose acquaintance with her had begun in 1738, she showed, in Jan. 1749-50, the Bible above mentioned, which had come to her from her mother. Newton's account of her, in 1749, is as follows. "She is aged about sixty, and weak and infirm. She seemeth to be a good, plain, sensible woman, and has confirmed several particulars related above, and informed me of some others, which she had often heard from her mother . . . that he [Milton] kept his daughters at a great distance, and would not allow them to learn to write, which he thought unnecessary for a woman [Mrs. Foster is not quite correct here]; that her mother was his greatest favourite, and could read in seven or eight languages, though she understood none but English; that her mother inherited his headaches and disorders, and had such a weakness in her eyes that she was forced to make use of spectacles at the age of eighteen [*i.e.* almost from the time when she left her father's house]; and she herself, she says, has not been able to read a chapter in the Bible these twenty years." The poor circumstances of this granddaughter of Milton having been made known, a performance of *Comus* for her benefit took place in Drury Lane Theatre on the

have been his amanuenses, if they had the requisite ability. But the eldest could not write, and *she*, therefore, is excluded. The second could write tolerably, and the youngest still better; and *they* may, therefore, have helped occasionally,—more especially the youngest; in whose favour we have also Aubrey's note, for whatever it is worth, "Deborah was his amanuensis." Before the poem was completed,

5th of April 1750, Dr. Johnson writing a Prologue, and Bishop Newton and the publisher Tonson contributing handsomely. It is the calculation of Todd that the whole proceeds amounted only to £147 · 14 : 6, out of which about £80 had to be deducted for expenses. This, however, is hardly reconcilable with Dr. Johnson's account; who, after saying (Life of Milton) that "the profits of the night were only one hundred and thirty pounds," evidently implies that this sum was clear of all expenses by adding, "Of this sum one hundred pounds were placed in the stocks, after some debate between her [Mrs. Foster] and her husband in whose name it should be entered; and the rest augmented their little stock, with which they removed to Islington." All Mrs. Foster's children, of whom she had had seven, having died in infancy, she was then the sole descendant of Milton living, "unless," as she told Bishop Newton, "there were some in the East Indies; which she very much questions, for she used to hear from them sometimes, but has heard nothing now for several years." This refers to the family of her brother Caleb Clarke, mentioned above as Deborah's only surviving son. What became of this Caleb Clarke, the grandson of Milton? He had gone to India, apparently when a very young man; for, even if he was Deborah's eldest child, he cannot have been born earlier than 1676, and we find him in Madras in 1703. He was then a married man; his wife's Christian name was Mary, but her surname is unknown. He had three children by her, all born at Madras: Abraham, baptized June 2, 1703; Mary, baptized March 17, 1706, and buried in December of the same year; and Isaac, baptized Feb. 13, 1711. Caleb Clarke himself was afterwards, *i.e.* from 1717 to 1719, parish-clerk of Fort St. George; where he was buried on the 16th of October in the latter year. At the time of his death his son Abraham was in England; but he returned to India, and in September 1725, being then two-and-twenty years of age, married a wife whose Christian name was Anna. They had a child Mary, born at Madras, and whose birth is registered there April 2, 1727. This is the last glimpse of those Clarkes in Madras, unless we take their relative Mrs. Foster's account to Bishop Newton to mean that she had occasionally heard of them till as late as 1740. It is concluded that they all died out, and that consequently Milton's direct line is extinct. But the conclusion is not absolutely necessary. In 1727, Abraham Clarke, Milton's great-grandson, and the father of the infant Mary, was but four-and-twenty years of age. He may have had other children subsequently. His brother Isaac, too, was then only sixteen years of age, and remains unaccounted for. And what of the infant Mary, born in that year? Strange that this great-great-grandchild of Milton, born in India, should have been in existence before the death of either her great-grandmother, Milton's daughter Deborah, or her step-great-grandmother, Milton's third wife, at Nantwich!

however, there was at hand a fitter amanuensis than either in Milton's third wife. "Her husband," she told people afterwards in her widowhood, "used to compose his poetry chiefly in winter, and on his waking in the morning would make her write down sometimes twenty or thirty verses."¹ Here, however, is a passage from Phillips, still more distinct:—"There is another very remarkable passage in the composure of this poem, which I have a particular occasion to remember; for, whereas I had the perusal of it from the very beginning, for some years as I went from time to time to visit him, in a parcel of ten, twenty, or thirty verses at a time,—which, *being written by whatever hand came next*, might possibly want correction as to the orthography and pointing,—having, as the summer came on, not been shewed any for a considerable while, and desiring the reason thereof, [I] was answered, that his vein never happily flowed but from the Autumnal Equinoctial to the Vernal [*i.e.* from the end of September to the end of March], and that whatever he attempted [at other times] was never to his satisfaction, though he exerted his fancy never so much: so that, in all the years he was about this poem, he may be said to have spent but half his time therein." What has been most generally noted in this passage is the interesting information that Milton believed his vein of invention to be happier in the winter than in the summer half of the year, and did actually produce most of his *Paradise Lost* in late autumn, winter, and early spring.² But the information respecting the amanuenses is also worthy of notice. The poem was committed to paper, says Phillips, in parcels of ten, twenty, or thirty verses at a time, by *any hand that happened to be near*. This might be that of either of the two younger daughters; latterly, it might be that of the third wife; but, quite as often, it may have been that of a hired amanuensis, or one of the numerous young men who came to his house at stated times to read to him for their own benefit. That he used such casual help in writing is otherwise known. In the volume of Milton MSS. in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge, of which an account has been given at pp. 102-7 of vol. i. and pp. 43-47 of this volume, there are several scraps in other hands than Milton's own. These are either the first drafts or transcripts of some of his sonnets, written between 1642

¹ Newton's *Life of Milton*, edit. 1761, p. lxxv.

² The same fact is stated by Aubrey; to whom Phillips had mentioned it verbally (1680) many years before printing it himself.

and 1658, inclusively. At least six different hands may be counted in these scraps: not one of them his daughter Deborah's, or his daughter Mary's, or his third wife's. Indeed, if the scraps were written at the dates to which they refer, it is impossible that any of them should have been written by the third wife, since he was not married to her till 1662-3. It is equally impossible that they should have been written by either of his youngest daughters, since neither of them was born at the date of the earliest, and at the date of the latest Mary was but nine, and Deborah not six, years of age. But, whether they were written at the dates to which they refer or were transcripts afterwards, it is clear that they were written by various persons, and each by whatever hand chanced to be at Milton's service for the moment. And so till Milton's death. In the last of his private letters extant,—dated London, Aug. 15, 1666, and addressed to the Peter Heimbach already mentioned as one of his foreign acquaintances,—he asks his correspondent to excuse any faults in the writing or punctuation, on the ground that the letter has been written for him by a boy knowing nothing of Latin, and to whom he has been obliged therefore, in dictating, to spell out the words letter by letter. We can conceive Milton dictating parts of his *Paradise Lost* even to so unlikely an amanuensis as this; to whom, after all, neither of his writing daughters can have been much superior.

To whomsoever he dictated, one would like to know anything that is to be known of his manner of dictating. On this point we have no additional information more authentic than that which the painter Richardson had been able to collect from tradition when he wrote his sketch of Milton's Life in 1734. "Other stories I have heard," says Richardson, "concerning the posture he was usually in when he dictated: that he sat leaning backward obliquely in an easy chair, with his leg slung over the elbow of it. That he frequently composed lying in bed on a morning ('twas winter, sure, then), I have been well informed; that, when he could not sleep, but lay awake whole nights, he tried [and] not one verse could he make, [but] at other times flowed 'easy his unpremeditated verse,' with a certain impetus and astro, as himself seemed to believe. Then, at what hour soever, he rung for his daughter to secure what came. I have also been told he would dictate many, perhaps forty, lines, as it were in a breath, and then reduce them to half

"the number."¹ We can believe part of this at least, though it would have been better if Richardson had given his authorities.

Yet one final inquiry respecting these mechanical matters.—By whatever instalments, at the hands of various amanuenses, day by day and week by week through five or seven years, and especially the winters of those years, Milton succeeded in transferring his epic to paper in its first continuous rough copy, that copy, we may be sure, would not satisfy him. He must have changed his habits very much if it did. Of Shakespeare the earliest editors of his Plays say, "His mind and hand went together; and what he thought he uttered with that easiness that we have scarce received from him a blot in his papers." With Milton it was different. His mind and hand, indeed, also went together, and what he thought he uttered nobly at first; but he was always re-thinking, and compelling his hand to consequent modifications of what it had already executed. The drafts of his earlier poems, yet extant in his own hand in Trinity College, Cambridge, are a revelation in this respect. They prove him to have been a most fastidious corrector of his own productions. They, and especially some of them, abound with erasures, marginal corrections, interlineations, re-insertions of words once erased, and even re-oblit-erations of these in favour of new changes. Almost uniformly, too, every correction is for the better, and the last form of a phrase or passage is the most perfect, both in meaning and in music. Now we cannot suppose that there was no corresponding process during the composition of *Paradise Lost*. Only we may suppose that much of the process was transacted mentally: that the poet, before he dictated a passage or instalment of his poem, had in many cases kept it sounding in his mind for a while and assuming the shape that satisfied him. Similarly, we must suppose him, —carrying as he doubtless did the whole poem, as far as it was composed, in his memory,—not unfrequently going back upon portions of it, and here and there improving expressions, or adding lines and passages for the sake of increased strength or beauty, or indeed making modifications that had become necessary in consequence of some new idea that had struck him farther on as to some part of the conduct of the story. Hence there would be changes, by his direction, in the aggregate copy that had grown out of his first piecemeal dictations. We have also Edward

¹ Explanatory Notes and Remarks on Milton's *Paradise Lost*. By J. Richardson, Father and Son. London, 1734. Life, by J. R. scilicet, prefixed p. cxiv.

Phillips's information that it was he that assisted his uncle in amending this copy, or part of it, in those more minute particulars of spelling, punctuation, etc., to which the original amanuenses were not competent, and in which it was difficult for the blind author to superintend them. Suppose all finished in this way, however, and still one fair copy at least would be necessary for the licencer and the press, not to speak of previous perusal by private friends. It must surely have been such a fair copy, and not the only manuscript in Milton's possession, that he lent to the young Quaker Ellwood at the cottage in Chalfont-St.-Giles, Buckinghamshire, in the summer of 1665. At all events, there was the fair copy that went to the licencer, Mr. Tomkyns, in the following year, and from which the poem was printed by Simmons. The first book of that copy is still extant (see *ante*, p. 6, note); and a facsimile of the first few lines of it will be found in vol. iii. of this edition. As the other books of the copy are not extant, we do not know that the *whole* was written by the same hand; but it would be something to identify the hand that wrote this fair copy of even the First Book. I have not succeeded in doing so. The hand certainly is *not* that of any of Milton's daughters; it is *not* his third wife's; it is *not* Edward Phillips's, nor John Phillips's; it is *not* Andrew Marvell's; it is *not* Cyriack Skinner's; nor, as far as I have been able to examine, is it that of any of the amanuenses who were employed in writing the manuscript of Milton's Treatise *De Doctrinâ Christianâ*. This treatise, being in Latin, required perhaps amanuenses of a higher order than sufficed for the English poem.¹ The hand in the extant manuscript of the First Book of *Paradise Lost* is what is called a "secretary hand" of the period, and is probably that of a professional penman. The manuscript is neat and accurate enough, but there are corrections in it by another hand.

¹ It shows how firmly the legend of Milton's dictations to his daughters had taken hold of the popular mind that even an expert like Mr. Lemon supposed one of the hands in the MS. of the Treatise on Christian Doctrine,—"a beautiful Italian hand," as he described it,—to be the hand of Milton's second daughter, Mary. It is the hand of Daniel Skinner, a relative of Cyriack Skinner's, and one of Milton's latest amanuenses.

SECTION III.

SCHEME AND MEANING OF THE POEM.

PARADISE LOST is an Epic. But it is not, like the *Iliad* or the *Æneid*, a national epic, nor is it an epic after any other of the known types. It is an epic of the whole human species,—an epic of our entire planet, or indeed of the entire astronomical universe. The title of the poem, though perhaps the best that could have been chosen, hardly indicates beforehand the full extent of the theme. Nor are the opening lines sufficiently descriptive of what is to follow. According to them, the song is to be

Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
Brought Death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden.

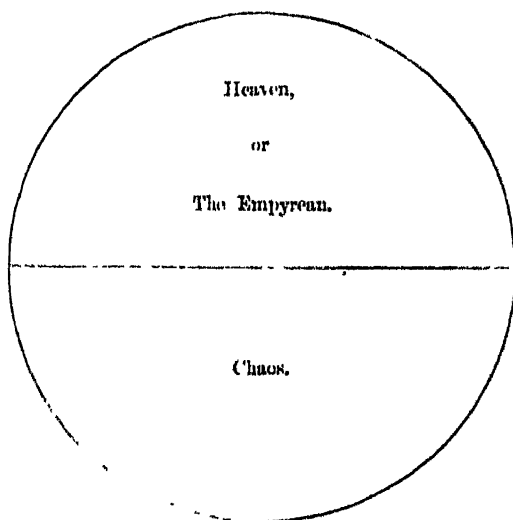
This is a true description, for the whole story bears on that point. But it is the vast comprehension of the story, both in space and in time, as leading to that point, that makes it unique among epics, and entitles Milton to speak of it as involving

Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.

It is, in short, a poetical representation, on the authority of hints from the Book of Genesis and other parts of the Bible, of the historical connexion between Human Time and Aboriginal or Eternal Infinity, or between our Created World and the immeasurable and inconceivable Universe of Pre-human Existence. So far as our World is concerned, the poem starts from that moment when our newly-created Earth, with all the newly-created starry depths about it, had as yet but two human beings upon it. These consequently *are*, on this side of the presupposed Infinite Eternity, the main persons of the epic. But we are carried *back* into this presupposed Infinite Eternity; and the grand purpose of the poem is to connect, by a stupendous imagination, certain events or courses of the inconceivable history that had been unfolding itself there with the first fortunes of that new azure World which is familiar to us, and more particularly with the first fortunes of that favoured ball at the centre whereon those two human creatures walked. Now the

person of the epic through the narration of whose acts this connexion is established is Satan. He, as all the critics have perceived, and in a wider sense than most of them have perceived, is the real hero of the poem. He and his actions are the link between that new World of Man the infancy of which we behold in the poem and that boundless antecedent Universe of Pre-human Existence which the poem assumes. For he was a *native* of that pre-human universe,—one of its greatest and most conspicuous natives; and what we follow in the poem, when its story is taken chronologically, is the life of this great being, from the time of his yet unimpaired archangelship among the Celestials, on to that time when, in pursuit of a scheme of revenge, he flings himself into the new experimental World, tries the strength of the new race at its fountain-head, and, by success in his attempt, vitiates Man's portion of space and wins possession of it for a season. The attention of the reader is particularly requested to the following remarks and diagrams.

Aboriginally, or in primeval Eternity, before the creation of our Earth or the Starry Universe to which it belongs, universal space is to be considered, according to the requisites of the poem, not as containing stars or starry systems at all, but as a sphere of infinite radius,—the phrase is, of course, self-contradictory, but it is necessary,—divided into two hemispheres, thus :



The upper of these two hemispheres of Primeval Infinity is HEAVEN, or THE EMPYREAN,—a boundless, unimaginable region of light, freedom, happiness, and glory, in the midst whereof GOD, though omnipresent, has His immediate and visible dwelling. He is here surrounded by a vast population of beings, called “The Angels,” or “Sons of God,” who draw near to His throne in worship, derive thence their nurture and their delight, and yet live dispersed through all the ranges and recesses of the region, leading severally their mighty lives and performing the behests of Deity, but organised into companies, orders, and hierarchies. Milton is careful to explain that all that he says of Heaven is said symbolically, and in order to make conceivable by the human imagination what in its own nature is inconceivable; but, this once explained, he is bold enough in his use of terrestrial analogies. Round the immediate throne of Deity, indeed, there is kept a blazing mist of vagueness, which words are hardly permitted to pierce, though the Angels are represented as from time to time assembling within it, beholding the Divine Presence and hearing the Divine Voice. But Heaven at large, or portions of it, are figured as tracts of a celestial Earth, with plain, hill, and valley, whereon the myriads of the Sons of God expatiate, in their two orders of Seraphim and Cherubim, and in their descending ranks, as Archangels or Chiefs, Princes of various degrees, and individual Powers and Intelligences. Certain differences, however, are implied as distinguishing these Celestials from the subsequent race of Mankind. As they are of infinitely greater prowess, immortal, and of more purely spiritual nature, so their ways even of physical existence and action transcend all that is within human experience. Their forms are dilatable or contractable at pleasure; they move with “incredible swiftness; and, as they are not subject to any law of gravitation, their motion, though ordinarily represented as horizontal over the Heavenly ground, may as well be vertical or in any other direction, and their aggregations need not, like those of men, be in squares, oblongs, or other plane figures, but may be in cubes, or other rectangular or oblique solids, or in spherical masses. These and various other particulars are to be kept in mind concerning Heaven and its pristine inhabitants. As respects the other half or hemisphere of the Primeval Infinity, though it too is inconceivable in its nature, and has to be described by words which are at best symbolical, less needs be said. For it is CHAOS, or the Uninhabited,

--a huge, limitless ocean, abyss, or quagmire, of universal darkness and lifelessness, wherein are jumbled in blustering confusion the elements of all matter, or rather the crude embryos of all the elements, ere as yet they are distinguishable. There is no light there, nor properly Earth, Water, Air, or Fire, but only a vast pulp or welter of unformed matter, in which all these lie tempestuously intermixed. Though the presence of Deity is there potentially too, it is still, as it were, actually retracted thence, as from a realm unorganised and left to Night and Anarchy; nor do any of the Angels wing down into its repulsive obscurities. The crystal floor or wall of Heaven divides them from it, underneath which, and unvisited of light, save what may glimmer through upon its nearer strata, it howls and rages and stagnates eternally.

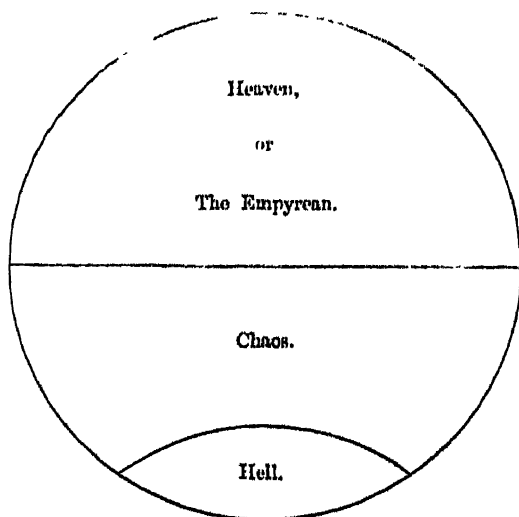
Such is, and has been, the constitution of the Universal Infinitude, from ages immemorial in the Angelic reckoning. But lo! at last a day in the annals of Heaven when the grand monotony of existence hitherto is disturbed and broken. On a day,—“such day as Heaven’s great year brings forth” (V. 582, 583),—all the Empyrean host of Angels, called by imperial summons from all the ends of Heaven, assemble innumerable before the throne of the Almighty; beside whom, imbosomed in bliss, sat the Divine Son. They had come to hear this divine decree :

“ Hear, all ye Angels, Progeny of Light,
Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers,
Hear my decree, which unrevoked shall stand !
This day I have begot whom I declare
My only Son, and on this holy hill
Him have anointed, whom ye now behold
At my right hand. Your head I him appoint ;
And by myself have sworn to him shall bow
All knees in Heaven, and shall confess him Lord.”

With joy and obedience is this decree received throughout the hierarchies, save in one quarter. One of the first of the Archangels in Heaven, if not the very first,—the coequal of Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael, if not their superior,—is the Archangel known afterwards (for his first name in Heaven is lost) as Satan or Lucifer. In him the effect of the decree is rage, envy, pride, the resolution to rebel. He conspires with his next subordinate, known afterwards as Beelzebub; and there is formed by them that faction in Heaven

which includes at length one-third of the entire Heavenly host. Then ensue the wars in Heaven,—Michael and the loyal Angels warring against Satan and the rebel Angels, so that for two days the Empyrean is in uproar. But on the third day the Messiah himself rides forth in his chariot of power, armed with ten thousand thunders. Right on he drives, in his sole might, through the rebel ranks, till they are trampled and huddled, in one indiscriminate flock, incapable of resistance, before him and his fires. But his purpose is not utterly to destroy them,—only to expel them from Heaven. Underneath their feet, accordingly, the crystal wall or floor of Heaven opens wide, rolling inwards, and disclosing a spacious gap into the dark Abyss or Chaos. Horrorstruck they start back; but worse urges them behind. Headlong they fling themselves down, eternal wrath burning after them, and driving them still down, down, through Chaos, to the place prepared for them.

The place prepared for them! Yes, for now there is a modification in the map of Universal Space to suit the changed conditions of



the Universe. At the bottom of what has hitherto been Chaos there is now marked out a kind of Antarctic region, distinct from the body of Chaos proper. This is HELL,—a vast region of fire, sulphurous lake, plain, and mountain, and of all forms of fiery and icy torment.

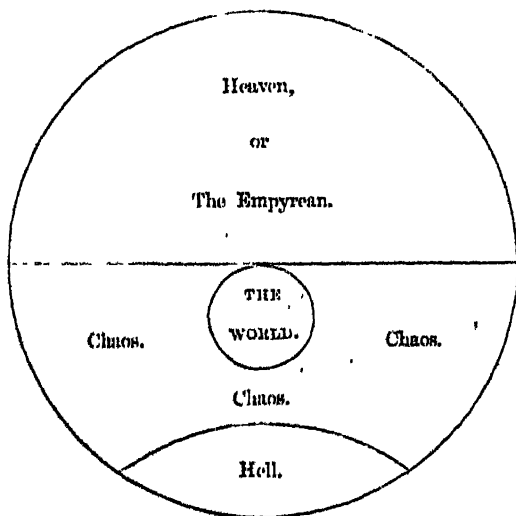
It is into this nethermost and dungeon-like portion of space that the Fallen Angels are thrust. For nine days and nights they have been falling through Chaos, or rather being driven down through Chaos by the Messiah's pursuing thunders, before they reach this new home destined for them (VI. 871). When they do reach it, the roof closes over them and shuts them in. Meanwhile the Messiah has returned into highest Heaven, and there is rejoicing over the expulsion of the damned.

For the moment, therefore, there are three divisions of Universal Space,—HEAVEN, CHAOS, and HELL. Almost immediately, however, there is a fourth. Not only have the expelled Angels been nine days and nights in falling through Chaos to reach Hell; but, after they have reached Hell and it has closed over them, they lie for another period of nine days and nights (I. 50—53) stupefied and bewildered in the fiery gulf. It is during this second nine days that there takes place a great event, which farther modifies the map of Infinitude. Long had there been talk in Heaven of a new race of beings to be created at some time by the Almighty, inferior in some respects to the Angels, but in the history of whom and of God's dealings with them there was to be a display of the divine power and love which even the Angels might contemplate with wonder. The time for the creation of this new race of beings has now arrived. Scarcely have the Rebel Angels been enclosed in Hell, and Chaos has recovered from the turmoil of the descent of such a rout through its depths, when the Paternal Deity, addressing the Son, tells him that, in order to repair the loss caused to Heaven, the predetermined creation of Man and of the World of Man shall now take effect. It is for the Son to execute the will of the Father. Straightway he goes forth on his creating errand. The everlasting gates of Heaven open wide to let him pass forth; and, clothed with majesty, and accompanied with thousands of Seraphim and Cherubim, anxious to behold the great work to be done, he does pass forth,—far into that very Chaos through which the Rebel Angels have so recently fallen, and which now intervenes between Heaven and Hell. At length he stays his fervid wheels, and, taking the golden compasses in his hands, centres one point of them where he stands and turns the other through the obscure profundity around (VII. 224—231). Thus are marked out, or cut out, through the body of Chaos, the limits of the new Universe of Man: that Starry Universe which to us seems measureless and

the same as Infinity itself, but which is really only a beautiful azure sphere or drop, insulated in Chaos, and hung at its topmost point or zenith from the Empyrean. But, though the limits of the new experimental Creation are thus at once marked out, the completion of the Creation is a work of Six Days (VII. 243—550). On the last of these, to crown the work, the happy Earth receives its first human pair, the appointed lords of the entire new Creation, surveying it with newly-awakened gaze from the Paradise where they are placed, and where they have received the one sole command that is to try their allegiance. And so, resting from his labours, and beholding all that he had made, that it was good, the Messiah returned to his Father, reascending through the golden gates which were now just over the zenith of the new World, and were its point of suspension from the Empyrean Heaven; and the Seventh Day or Sabbath was spent in songs of praise by all the Heavenly hosts over the finished work, and in contemplation of it as it hung beneath them,

“another Heaven,
From Heaven-gate not far, founded in view
On the clear hyaline.”

And now, accordingly, this was the diagram of the Universal Infinitude:



There are the three regions of HEAVEN, CHAOS, and HELL, as

before; but there is also now a fourth region, hung drop-like into Chaos by an attachment to Heaven at the north pole or zenith. This is the New WORLD, or the STARRY UNIVERSE: all that Universe of orbs and galaxies which man's vision can reach by utmost power of telescope, and which even to his imagination is illimitable. And yet as to the proportions of this World to some part of the total map Milton dares to be exact. The distance from its nadir or lowest point to the upper boss of Hell is exactly equal to its own radius; or, in other words, the distance of Hell-gate from Heaven-gate is exactly three semidiameters of the Human or Starry Universe (I. 73, 74).

Meanwhile, just as this final and stupendous modification of the map of Infinitude has been accomplished, Satan and his rebel adherents in Hell begin to recover from their stupor,—Satan first, and the others at his call. There ensue Satan's first speech to them, their first surveys of their new domain, their building of their palace of Pandemonium, and their deliberations there in full council as to their future policy. Between Moloch's advice for a renewal of open war with Heaven, and Belial's and Mammon's counsels, which recommend acquiescence in their new circumstances and a patient effort to make the best of them, Beelzebub insinuates the proposal which is really Satan's, and which is ultimately carried. It is that there should be an excursion from Hell back through Chaos, to ascertain whether that new Universe, with a new race of beings in it, of which there had been so much talk in Heaven, and which there was reason to think might have come into existence about this time, *had* come into existence. If it had, might not means be found to vitiate this new Universe and the favoured race that was to possess it, and to drag them down to the level of Hell itself? Would not such a ruining of the Almighty's new experiment at its outset be a revenge that would touch Him deeply? Would it not be easier than open war? And on the stepping-stone of such a success might they not raise themselves to further victory, or at least to an improvement of their present condition, and an extent of empire that should include more than Hell?

Satan's counsel having been adopted, it is Satan himself that adventures the perilous expedition up through Chaos in quest of the new Universe. He is detained for a while at Hell-gate by the ghastly shapes of Sin and Death, who are there to guard it; but, the

gates being at length opened to him, never to shut again, he emerges into the hideous Chaos overhead. His journey up through it is arduous. Climbing, swimming, wading, flying, through the boggy consistency, now falling plumb-down thousands of fathoms, again carried upwards by a gust or explosion, he reaches at length, about midway in his journey, the central throne and pavilion where CHAOS personified and NIGHT have their government. Here he receives definite intelligence that the new World he is in search of has actually been created. Thus encouraged, and directed on his way, again he springs upward, "like a pyramid of fire," through what of Chaos remains ; and, after much farther flying, tacking, and steering, he at last reaches the upper confines of Chaos, where its substance seems thinner, so that he can wing about more easily, and where a glimmering of the light from above begins also to appear. For a while in this calmer space he weighs his wings to behold at leisure (II. 1046) the sight that is breaking upon him. And what a sight !

" Far off the Empyrean extended wide
In circuit, undetermined square or round,
With opal towers and battlements adorned
Of living sapphire,—once his native seat ;
And, fast by, hanging in a golden chain,
This pendent World, in bigness as a star
Of smallest magnitude close by the moon."

Care must be taken not to misinterpret this passage. Addison misinterpreted it most woefully. He speaks of Satan's distant discovery "of the Earth that hung close by the Moon" as one of the most "wonderfully beautiful and poetical" passages of the poem. But it is more wonderfully poetical than Addison thought. For, as even a correct reading of the passage by itself would have shown, the "pendent *World*" which Satan here sees is not the *Earth* at all, but the entire Starry Universe, or Mundane System, hung drop-like by a golden touch from the Empyrean above it. In proportion to this Empyrean, at the distance whence Satan gazes, even the Starry Universe pendent from it is but as a star of smallest magnitude on the edge of the full or crescent moon.¹

At length (III. 418—422) Satan alights on the opaque outside,

¹ Heaven or the Empyrean being necessarily represented in our diagram as of definite dimensions, instead of infinite or indefinite, this minuteness of the Mundane System in comparison has to be *imagined*.

or convex shell, of the New Universe. As he had approached it, what seemed at first but as a star had taken the dimensions of a globe; and, when he had alighted, and begun to walk on it, this globe had become, as it seemed, a boundless continent of firm land, exposed, dark and starless, to the stormy Chaos blustering round like an inclement sky. Only on the upper convex of the shell, in its angles towards the zenith, some reflection of light was gained from the wall of Heaven. Apparently it was on this upper convex of the outside of the new World, and not at its nadir or the point nearest Hell, that Satan first alighted and walked (compare II. 1034—1053, III. 418—430, X. 312—349). At all events, he had to reach the zenith before he could begin the real business of his errand. For only at this point was there an opening into the interior of the Universe. All the outer shell, save at that point, was hard, compact; not even transpicious to the light within, as the spherical glass round a lamp is; but totally opaque, or only glistening faintly on its upper side with the reflected light of Heaven. Accordingly,—after wandering on this dark outside of the Universe long enough to allow Milton that extraordinary digression (III. 440—497) in which he finds one of the most magnificently grotesque uses for the outside of the Universe that it could have occurred to any poet to conceive,—the Fiend is attracted in the right direction to the opening at the zenith. What attracts him thither is a gleam of light from the mysterious structure or staircase (III. 501 *et seq.*) which there serves the Angels in their descents from Heaven's gate into the Human Universe, and again in their ascents from the Universe to Heaven's gate. Sometimes these stairs are drawn up to Heaven and invisible; but at the moment when Satan reached the spot they were let down, so that, standing on the lower stair, and gazing down through the opening right underneath, he could suddenly behold the whole interior of the Starry Universe at once. He can behold it in all directions: both in the direction of *latitude*, or depth from the pole where he stands to the opposite pole or nadir; and also *longitudinally*,

“from eastern point
Of Libra to the fleecy star that bears
Andromeda far off Atlantic seas
Beyond the horizon.”

At this point, and before following the Fiend in his flight down into the interior of our Astronomical Universe, it is necessary to

describe the system or constitution of that interior as it is conceived by Milton and assumed throughout the poem. Let us attend, therefore, more particularly now to that small central circle of our last diagram, hanging drop-like from the Empyrean, which we have as yet described no farther than by saying that, small as it is, it represents our vast Starry Universe in Milton's total scheme of Infinitude. Although a great part of the action of the poem takes place in the Empyrean, in Chaos, and in Hell, much of it also takes place within the bounds of this Starry Universe of ours; so that, if there is any peculiarity in Milton's conception of the interior arrangements of this Universe, that peculiarity must be understood before many parts of the poem are intelligible. Such a peculiarity there is; and a distinct exposition of it is desirable in an Introduction to the Poem.

Milton's Astronomy, or at least the astronomical system which he thought proper to employ in his *Paradise Lost*, is not our present Copernican system; which, in his time, was not generally or popularly accepted. It is the older astronomical system, now usually called "the Ptolemaic," because it had been set forth in its main features, in the second century of our era, by the astronomer Ptolemy of Alexandria.

According to this "Ptolemaic system," the Earth was the fixed centre of the Mundane Universe, and the apparent motions of the other celestial bodies were caused by the real revolutions of successive Heavens or Spheres of Space enclosing the central Earth at different distances. First, and nearest to the Earth, were the Spheres or Orbs of the seven Planets then known, in this order: the Moon (treated as a planet), Mercury, Venus, the Sun (treated as a planet: the "glorious planet Sol," Shakespeare calls him, *Troil. and Cress., Act I. Scene 3*), Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. Beyond these, as an Eighth Sphere or Orb, was the Firmament or Heaven of all the fixed stars. These eight Spheres or Heavens had sufficed till Aristotle's time, and beyond it, for all the purposes of astronomical explanation. The outermost or eighth Sphere was supposed to wheel diurnally, or in twenty-four hours, from East to West, carrying in it all the fixed stars, and carrying with it also all the seven interior Heavens or Spheres; which Spheres, however, had also separate and slower motions of their own, giving rise to those apparent motions of the Moon (months), Mercury, Venus, the Sun (years), Mars, Jupiter, and

Saturn, which could not be accounted for by the revolution of the Starry Sphere alone. But, later observations having discovered irregularities in the phenomena of the heavens which the supposed motions of even the Eight Spheres could not account for, two extra Spheres had been added. To account for the slow change called "the precession of the equinoxes," the discovery of which was prepared by Hipparchus in the second century B.C., it had been necessary to imagine a Ninth Sphere, called "the Crystalline Sphere," beyond that of the Fixed Stars; and, finally, for farther reasons, it had been necessary to suppose all enclosed in a Tenth Sphere, called "the Primum Mobile," or "first moved." These two outermost Spheres, or at least the Tenth Sphere, had been added in the Middle Ages; and, indeed, the Ptolemaic system, so completed up to the final number of Ten Spheres, may be called rather the "Alphonsine system," as having been adopted and taught by the famous king and astronomer, Alphonso X. of Castile (1203—1284). The following extract, which we translate from a Latin manual or Catechism of Astronomy by Michael Moestlinus, Professor of Mathematics in the University of Heidelberg, and preceptor of Kepler (*Epitome Astronomiæ*, etc., 1582, pp. 34, 35), will give an idea of the form in which the system was popularly taught in schools and universities all over Europe till it was superseded by that of Copernicus:—" *Quest.* How many are the Orbs, or celestial Spheres, "and what is their order?" *Ans.* "There are various opinions "concerning the number and order of the celestial Spheres; but, "following for the present, for the sake of learners, the doctrine of "the Alphonsines, we reckon ten, in this order:—The 1st is the "Sphere of the Moon, which has the lowest place in the *Æther*; "the 2d that of Mercury; the 3d that of Venus; the 4th that of "the Sun; the 5th that of Mars; the 6th that of Jupiter; the 7th "that of Saturn. And these are the Spheres of the Seven Planets, "or wandering stars, each of which has only one star, viz. its own "planet, inserted in it. To these an 8th succeeds, which, from its "order, is called 'the Eighth Sphere,' but also 'the Firmament,' on "account of its containing, and as it were fortifying or walling round, "all the other Spheres; for it was believed by the ancients to be "the last and supreme Sphere. It is also called the Sphere of the "Fixed Stars, because in it are all the rest of the stars, whatever "their number, after the planets are excepted. There is moreover

"a 9th Sphere, and finally there is a 10th; which last is the Primum Mobile, or Last Heaven. These two Spheres are destitute of "stars." It needs only be added that the Spheres were not necessarily supposed to be actual spheres of solid matter. It was enough if they were conceived as spheres of invisible or transpicuous space. Perhaps only the outermost Sphere, or Primum Mobile, enclosing the whole Universe from absolute Infinity or Nothingness, had to be thought of as in any sense a material or impenetrable shell.

The utter strangeness of this Ptolemaic system of the Cosmos to our present habits of thought causes us to forget how long it lasted. Although it was in 1543 that Copernicus propounded the other system, and although the views of Copernicus struggled gradually into the belief of subsequent astronomers, and had further demonstration given them by Galileo (between 1610 and 1616), the Ptolemaic or Alphonsine system, with its ten Spheres enclosing the stationary Earth at different distances, and wheeling round it in a complex combination of their separate motions, retained its prevalence in the popular mind of Europe, and even in the scientific world, till the end of the seventeenth century. Hence all the literature of England, and of other countries, down to that date, is latently cast in the imaginative mould of that system, and is full of its phrasology and of suggestions from it. There has never yet been a sufficient study of the influence of the Pre-Copernican Cosmology upon the thinkings and imaginations of mankind everywhere on all subjects whatsoever till about two hundred years ago. From the whole series of the English poets, from Chaucer to the Elizabethans and beyond, as I have ventured to say elsewhere, or indeed from the series of the poets of any one of the European nations, there might be culled an extraordinary collection of passages assuming the mundane constitution of the successive spheres, with the Primum Mobile as the last or outermost of them, and the Empyrean over and above, and requiring the recollection of that cosmological system for their due enjoyment and interpretation. When Shakespeare speaks of the "stars starting from their spheres," he means from the Ptolemaic spheres; and the word "sphere" in our old poetry has generally this meaning. Indeed, there are traces of Pre-Copernicanism in our current speech yet, as when we say, "This is not my sphere," or "You are out of your sphere." A full examination of our old literature in the light of the principle here suggested,—*i.e.* with the recollection that it was according to

the Ptolemaic conception of the Universe, and not according to the Copernican, that our old poets thought of things and expressed their thoughts,—would lead, I repeat, to very curious and very interesting results. We are concerned at present, however, with Milton only.

In Milton's case we are presented with the interesting phenomenon of a mind apparently uncertain to the last which of the two systems, the Ptolemaic or the Copernican, was the true one, or perhaps beginning to be persuaded of the higher probability of the Copernican, but yet retaining the Ptolemaic for poetical purposes. For Milton's life (1608—1674) coincides with the period of the struggle between the two systems. In his boyhood and youth he had, doubtless, inherited the general or Ptolemaic belief, that in which Shakespeare had died. Here, for example, is what everybody was reading during Milton's youth in that favourite book, *Sylvester's Du Bartas* :—

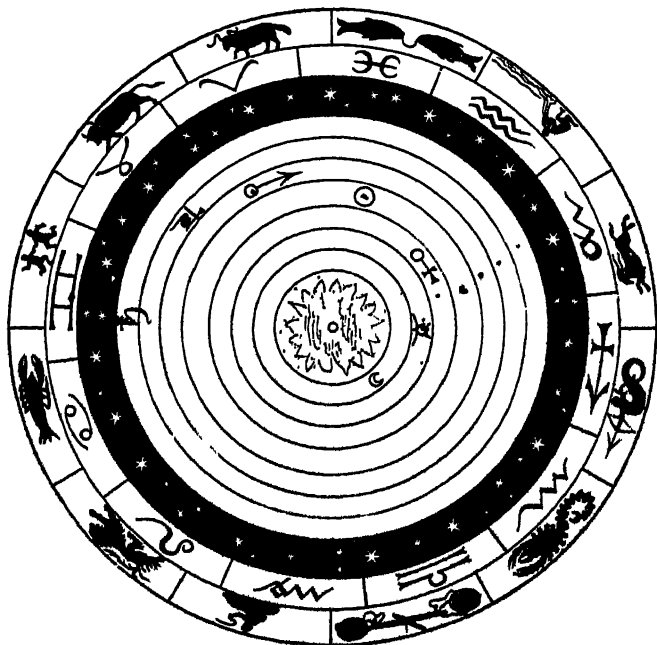
“ As the ague-sick upon his shivering pallet
 Delays his health oft to delight his palate,
 When wilfully his tasteless taste delights
 In things unsavoury to sound appetites,
 Even so some brain-sicks live there now-a-days
 That lose themselves still in contrary ways :
 Preposterous wits that cannot row at ease
 On the smooth channel of our common seas ;
 And such are those, in my conceit at least,
 Those clerks that think,—think how absurd a jest !—
 That neither heavens nor stars do turn at all
 Nor dance about this great round Earthly Ball,
 But the Earth itself, this massy globe of ours,
 Turns round about once every twice-twelve hours.”

Du Bartas had been a French Protestant, and his English translator, Sylvester, was a Puritan. It was not, therefore, only to the Roman Inquisition, or to Roman Catholics, that Galileo must have seemed a “brain-sick” and “a preposterous wit” when he advocated the Copernican theory. In 1638 Milton had himself conversed with Galileo, then old and blind, near Florence. “There it was,” he wrote in 1644 (*Areopag.*), “that I found and visited the famous “Galileo, grown old, a prisoner to the Inquisition, for thinking in “Astronomy otherwise than the Franciscan and Dominican licensors “thought.” And yet, despite this passage, and other passages showing how strongly the character and history of Galileo had fascinated him,

it may be doubted whether Milton even then felt himself entitled to reject the system which Galileo had impugned. His friends and literary associates, the *Smectymnuans*, at all events, in their answer to Bishop Hall's "Humble Remonstrance" (1641), had cited the Copernican doctrine as an unquestionable instance of a supreme absurdity. "There is no more truth in this assertion," they say of one of Bishop Hall's statements, "than if he had said, with Anaxagoras, 'Snow is black,' or, with Copernicus, 'The Earth moves and the Heavens stand still.'" There cannot be a more distinct proof than this incidental passage affords of the utter repulsiveness of the Copernican theory to even the educated English intellect as late as the middle of the seventeenth century. Milton was probably even then, if we may judge from the above-quoted reference to Galileo, in advance of his contemporaries on this question; and in the interval between that time and the completion of his *Paradise Lost* his Copernicanism may have become decided. There are, at any rate, two passages in *Paradise Lost* where he shows his perfect acquaintance with the Copernican theory, and with the arguments in its behalf. One (IV. 592—597) is an incidental passage; in the other and much longer passage (VIII. 15—178) he makes the question a subject of express conversation between Raphael and Adam. In this last passage Adam is represented as arriving by intuition at the Copernican theory, or at least as perceiving its superior simplicity over the Ptolemaic; and, though the drift of the Angel's reply is that the question is an abstruse one, and that it is of no great consequence for man's real duty in the world which system is the true one, yet the balance of the Angel's remarks is decidedly Copernican. There is no doubt that these two passages were deliberately inserted by Milton in order to relieve his own mind on the subject, and by way of caution to the reader that the scheme of the physical Universe actually adopted in the construction of the poem did not need to be taken as more than a hypothesis for the imagination.

That scheme is, undoubtedly, the Ptolemaic or Alphonsine. Accordingly, the little central circle hung drop-like from the Empyrean in our last diagram, and there representing the dimensions of the total Creation of the Six Days, or, in other words, of our Starry Universe, may be exhibited now on a magnified scale, by simply reproducing one of the diagrams of the Heavens which were given in all

the old books of Astronomy. The following is a copy (a little neater than the original, but otherwise exact) from a woodcut in an edition, in 1610, of the *Sphæra* of Joannes a Sacrobosco, with commentaries and additions by Clavius and others.¹



This, literally this, so far as mere diagram can represent it, is the World, or Cosmos, or Mundane Universe, as Milton keeps it in his mind's eye throughout the poem. It is an enormous azure round of

¹ Joannes a Sacrobosco, or John Holywood, was an English mathematician of the thirteenth century, who lived and died in Paris; and his treatise *De Sphæra*, as amended by later writers, continued for several centuries to be the favourite manual of Astronomy throughout Europe. Milton himself used it in teaching his pupils, as we learn from his nephew Phillips. With respect to the above cut (which I have selected from among many similar cuts in old manuals of Astronomy), it seems only necessary to guard the reader against the mistake of supposing that it represents the Mundane System in section precisely as in the former cuts. On the contrary, it represents the interior of the Cosmos as looked down into, in equatorial section, from the pole of the ecliptic. It is, in short, a view vertically down from the opening at the pole in the preceding cut,—the axis not being from top to bottom of the cut, but from the eye to the centre.

space, scooped or carved out of Chaos, and communicating aloft with the Empyrean, but consisting within itself of ten Orbs or hollow Spheres in succession, wheeling one within the other, down to the stationary nest of our small Earth at the centre, with the elements of water, air and fire that are immediately around it. It is according to this scheme that Milton virtually describes the process of Creation in the first, the second, and the fourth of the six days of Genesis (VII. 232—275 and 339—386): the only deviation being that the word "Firmament" is not there applied specifically to the 8th or Starry Sphere, but is used for the whole continuous depth of all the heavens as far as to the *Primum Mobile*. As if to prevent any mistake, however, there is one passage in which the Ten Spheres are actually enumerated. It is that (III. 481—483) where the attempted ascent of ambitious souls from Earth to the Empyrean by their own effort is described. In order to reach the opening into the Empyrean at the World's zenith, what are the successive stages of their flight?

"They pass the Planets Seven, and pass the Fixed,
And that Crystalline Sphere whose balance weighs
The trepidation talked, and that First Moved."

Here we have the Alphonsine heavens in their order, and with their exact names. But all through the poem the language assumes the same astronomical system. Where the words Orb and Sphere occur, for example, they almost invariably,—not *quite* invariably,—mean Orb or Sphere in the Ptolemaic sense. Yet, to make all safe, Milton, as we have seen, inserts two passages at least in which the Copernican theory of the heavens is distinctly suggested as a possible or probable alternative; and, moreover, even while using the language of the other theory, he so arranged that it need not be supposed he did so for any other reason than that of *poetical* preference.

In one respect the diagram must fail to convey Milton's complete notion of the World or Mundane Universe at that moment when he supposes the Fiend first gazing down into it from the glorious opening at the pole, and then plunging precipitate through its azure depths (III. 561—566) in quest of the particular spot in it where Man had his abode. That small Earth which is so conspicuous in the diagram, as being at the centre, either was not visible even to angelic eyes from such an amazing distance as the opening at the pole of the *primum mobile*, or was not yet marked. The luminary

that attracts Satan first, from its all-surpassing splendour,—at all events after he has passed the three outermost spheres, and so come within the glittering belt of the fixed constellations and galaxies,—is the Sun. Though the tenant only of the fourth of the Spheres, this luminary so far surpasses all others in majesty that it seems like the King not only of the seven Planetary Orbs, but of all the ten. It seems the very God of the whole new Universe, shooting its radiance even through the beds of the stars, as far as to the *primum mobile* itself (III. 571—587). It is thither, accordingly, that Satan bends his flight; it is on this of all the bodies in the new Universe that he first alights; and it is only after the Angel Uriel, whom he there encounters, and who does not recognise him in his disguise, has pointed out to him the Earth shining at a distance in the sunlight (III. 722—724) that he knows the exact scene of his further labours. Thus informed, he wings off again from the Sun's body, and, wheeling his steep flight towards the Earth, alights at length on the top of Niphates, near Eden.

— There is no need to follow the action of the poem farther in this Introduction. All that takes place after the arrival of Satan on the Earth,—all that large portion of the story that is enacted within the bounds of Eden or of Paradise, amid those terrestrial scenes of “bowery loneliness,” with brooks “mazily murmuring” and “bloom profuse of cedar arches,” of the quieter charm of which Tennyson speaks as competing in his mind with admiration of the Titanic and Cosmical grandeurs of the rest of the poem,—the reader can without difficulty make out for himself; or any such incidental elucidation as may be needed may be reserved for the Notes. It is necessary to take account here only of certain final modifications in Milton's imaginary physical structure of the Universe which occur after the Tempter has succeeded in his enterprise and Man has fallen.

In the first place there is then established, what did not exist before, a permanent communication between Hell and Man's Universe. When Satan had come up through Chaos from Hell-gate, he had done so with toil and difficulty, as one exploring his way; but no sooner had he succeeded in his mission than Sin and Death, whom he had left at Hell-gate, felt themselves instinctively aware of his success, and of the necessity there would thenceforward be of a distinct road between Hell and the New World, by which all the Infernals might go and come. Accordingly (X. 282—324) they do

construct such a road : a wonderful causey or bridge from Hell-gate, right through or over Chaos, to that exact part of the outside of the new Universe where Satan had first alighted, *i.e.* not to its nadir, but to some point near its zenith, where there is the break or orifice in the *primun mobile* towards the Empyrean. And what is the consequence of this vast alteration in the physical structure of the Universe ? The consequence is that the Infernal Host are no longer confined to Hell, but possess also the new Universe, like an additional island, or pleasure-domain, up in Chaos, and on the very confines of their former home, the Empyrean. Preferring this conquest to their proper empire in Hell, they are thenceforward perhaps more frequently in our World than in Hell, winging through its various Spheres, but inhabiting chiefly the Air round our central Earth. But this causey from Hell to the World, constructed by Sin and Death, is not the only modification of the Mundane Universe consequent on the Fall. The interior of the Human World as it hangs from the Empyrean receives some alterations for the worse by the decree of the Almighty Himself. The elements immediately round the Earth become harsher and more malignant, the planetary and starry spheres are so influenced that thenceforward planets and stars look inward upon the central Earth with aspects of malevolence ; nay, perhaps it was now first that, either by a heaving askance of the Earth from its former position, or by a change in the Sun's path, the ecliptic became oblique to the equator (X. 651—691). All this is apart from changes in the actual body of the Earth, including the obliteration of the site of the desecrated Paradise, and the outbreak of virulence among all things animate.

From the foregoing sketch, it will be seen that, while the poem is properly enough, as the name *Paradise Lost* indicates, the tragical story of the temptation and fall of the human race in its first parents, yet this story is included in a more comprehensive epic, of which the rebel Archangel is the hero, and the theatre of which is nothing less than Universal Infinitude. While the consummation, as regards Man, is the loss of innocence and Eden, and the liability to Death, and while the last objects that we see, in respect of this consummation, are the outcast pair, with the world all before them where to choose, taking their solitary way through Eden after their expulsion from Paradise, the consummation, as regards Satan, is more in the nature of a triumph. He has succeeded in *his* enterprise. He has vitiated

the new World at its beginning, and he has added it as a conquest to the Hell which had been assigned to him and his for their only proper realm. True, in the very hour of his triumph a curse has been pronounced upon him ; he and his host experience a farther abasement by being transmuted into the image of the Serpent ; and he and they are left with the expectation of a time when their supposed conquest will be snatched from them, and they will be driven in ignominy back to whence they came. Still, for the present, and until that "greater Man" arise who is to restore the human race, and be the final and universal victor, they are left in successful possession. Whatever the sequel is to be (and it is foreshadowed in vision in the two last books) the Epic has here reached its natural close. Its purpose was to furnish the imagination with such a story of transcendent construction as should connect the mysteries of the inconceivable and immeasurable universe anterior to Time and to Man with the traditions and experience of our particular planet. This is accomplished by fastening the imagination on one great being, supposed to belong to the thronging multitudes of the angelic race that peopled the Emyrean before our World was created ; by following this being in his actions as a rebel in Heaven and then as an exile into Hell ; and by leaving him at last so far in possession of the new Universe of Man that thenceforward his part as an Archangel is almost forgotten, and he is content with his new and degraded function as the Devil of the merely terrestrial regions. Thenceforward he and his are to dwell more in these terrestrial regions, and particularly in the air, than in Hell, mingling themselves devilishly in human affairs, and even, by a splendid stroke of diabolic policy, enjoying the worship of men while securing their ruin, by passing themselves off as gods and demigods of all kinds of mongrel mythologies. That this is the main course and purport of the Epic will be perceived all the more clearly if the reader will note how much of the action, though it all bears ultimately on the fate of Earth, takes place away from the Earth altogether, and at a rate different from that of earthly causation, in the Emyrean, in Hell, in Chaos, or among the orbs and starry interspaces of the entire Cosmos. The portions of the poem that are occupied with descriptions of Eden and Paradise and with the narrative of events there are richly a fruitful and attractive ; but they do not make more altogether than a fraction of the whole.

One result which ought to follow from a right understanding of the scheme of the Poem, as it has been here exhibited, is a truer idea of the place which Milton's Epic holds among the great poems of the world, and also of its relation to his total mind and life. What is that in any man which is highest, deepest, and most essential in him, which governs all, reveals all, gives the key to all that he thinks or is? What but his way of thinking or feeling, whatever it may be, respecting the relation or non-relation of the whole visible or physical world to that which is boundless, invisible, unfeatured, metaphysical? What he thinks or feels on this subject is essentially his philosophy; if he abstains from thinking on it at all, then this very abstinence is equally his philosophy. And what greater character can there be in a poem, or in any other work of art, than that it truly conveys the author's highest mind or mood on this subject,—his theory, if he has one, or his antipathy to any theory, should that be the case? It may be doubted whether the world has ever taken a poem to its larger heart, or placed it in the list of the poems spoken of as great, unless from a perception, more or less conscious, that it possessed, in a notable degree, this characteristic: that it was the expression, in some form or other, under whatever nominal theme, and with whatever intermixture of matter, of the intimate personal philosophy of a great living mind. To suppose, at all events, that Milton could have put forth any poem of large extent uninformed by his deepest and most serious philosophy of life and of the world, would indicate utter ignorance of his character. The ingenious construction of a fiction that should anyhow entertain the world, and which the author might behold floating away, detached from himself, like a mere bubble beautifully blown and iridescent: this was not *his* notion of poesy. Into whatever he wrote he was sure to put as much of *himself* as possible; and into that work which he intended to be his greatest it would have been safe to predict that he would studiously put the very most of himself. It would have been safe to predict that he would make it not only a phantasy or tale of majestic proportions, with which the human race might regale its leisure, but also a bequest of his own thoughts and speculations on the greatest subjects interesting to man: a kind of testament to posterity that it was thus and thus that he, Milton, veteran and blind, had learnt to think on such subjects, and dared to advise the world for ever to think also. True, from the nature of the case, a poet must express

himself on such subjects not so much in direct propositions addressed to the reason as in figurative conceptions, phantasmagories, or allegories, imagined individually and connectedly in accordance with an intellectual intention. In as far, therefore, as *Paradise Lost* is an expression of Milton's habitual mode of thought respecting Man and Human History in relation to an eternal and unknown Infinity, it is such by way of what the Germans call *Vorstellung* (popular image or representation) and not by way of *Begriff* (pure or philosophic notion). Whether on such subjects it is possible to address the human mind at all except through visual or other sensuous images, and whether the most abstract language of philosophers consists of anything else than such images triturated to dust and made colourless, needs not here be inquired. Whatever might have been Milton's abstract theory on any such subject, it was certainly in the nature of his genius to express it in a *Vorstellung*. He had faith in this method as that by which the collective soul of man had been impressed and ruled in all ages, and would be impressed and ruled to the end of time. He more than once inserts in the poem itself passages cautioning the reader that his descriptions and narratives of supra-mundane scenes and events are not to be taken literally, but only symbolically. Thus, when the Archangel Raphael, yielding to Adam's request, begins, after a pause, his narrative of the events that had taken place in the Empyrean Heaven before the creation of Man and his Universe, he is made (V. 563—576) to preface his narrative with these words :—

“ High matter thou enjoin'st me, O prime of Men—
 Sad task and hard ! For how shall I relate
 To human sense the invisible exploits
 Of warring Spirits ? how, without remorse,
 The ruin of so many, glorious once
 And perfect while they stood ? how, last, unfold
 The secrets of another World, perhaps
 Not lawful to reveal ? Yet for thy good
 This is dispensed ; and what surmounts the reach
 Of human sense I shall delineate so,
 By likening spiritual to corporal forms,
 As may express them best : though what if Earth
 Be but the shadow of Heaven, and things therein
 Each to other like more than on Earth is thought ? ”

Let *Paradise Lost*, then, be called a *Vorstellung*. But what a

Vorstellung it is! That World of Man, the world of all our stars and starry transparencies, hung but drop-like after all from an Empyrean; the great Empyrean itself, "undetermined square or round," so that, though we do diagram it for form's sake, it is beyond all power of diagram; a Hell, far beneath, but still measurably far, with its outcast infernal Powers tending disastrously upwards or tugging all downwards; finally, between the Empyrean and Hell, a blustering blackness of unimaginable Chaos, roaring around the Mundane Sphere and assaulting everlastingly its outermost bosses, but unable to break through, or to disturb the serenity of the golden poise that steadies it from the zenith: what phantasmagory more truly all-significant than this has the imagination of a poet ever conceived? What expanse of space comparable to this for vastness has any other poet presumed to fill with visual symbolisms, or to occupy with a coherent story? The physical universe of Dante's great poem would go into a nutshell as compared with that to which the imagination must stretch itself out in *Paradise Lost*. In this respect,—in respect of the extent of physical immensity through which the poem ranges, and which it orients forth with soul-dilating clearness and maps out with never-to-be-obliterated accuracy before the eye,—no possible poem can ever overpass it. And then the story itself! What story mightier or more full of meaning can there ever be than that of the Archangel rebelling in Heaven, degraded from Heaven into Hell, reascending from Hell to the Human Universe, winging through the starry spaces of that Universe, and at last possessing himself of our central Earth, and impregnating its incipient history with the spirit of Evil? Vastness of scene and power of story together, little wonder that the poem should have so impressed the world. Little wonder that it should now be Milton's Satan, and Milton's narrative of the Creation in its various transcendental connexions, that are in possession of the British imagination, rather than the strict Biblical accounts from which Milton so scrupulously derived the hints to which he gave such marvellous expansion.

But will the power of the poem be permanent? Grand conception as it is, was it not a conception framed too much in congruity with special beliefs and modes of thinking of Milton's own age to retain its efficiency for ever? If the matters it symbolised are matters which the human imagination, and the reason of man in its most exalted mood, must ever strive to symbolise in some form or

other, may not the very definiteness, the blazing visual exactness, of Milton's symbolic achievement jar on modern modes of thought? Do we not desire, in our days also, to be left to our own liberty of symbolising in those matters; and may it not be well to prefer, in the main, symbolisms the least fixed, the least sensuous, the most fluent and cloud-like, the most tremulous to every touch of new idea or new feeling? To this objection,—an objection, however, which would apply to all great Poetry and Art whatever, and would affect the paintings of Michael Angelo, for example, as much as the *Paradise Lost* of Milton,—something must be conceded. Changes in human ideas since the poem was written *have* thrown the poem, or parts of it, farther out of keeping with the demands of the modern imagination than it can have been with the requirements of Milton's contemporaries. Not to speak of the direct traces in it of a peculiar theology, in the form of speeches and arguments,—in which kind, however, there is less that need really be obsolete than some theological critics have asserted,—the Ptolemaism of Milton's astronomical scheme would alone put the poem somewhat in conflict with the educated modern conceptions of physical Nature. No longer now is the Mundane Universe thought of as a definite succession of Orbs round the globe of Earth. No longer now can the fancy of man be stayed at any distance, however immense, by an imaginary *primum mobile*, or outermost shell, beyond which all is Chaos. The *primum mobile* has been for ever burst; and into the Chaos supposed to be beyond it the imagination has voyaged out and still out, finding no Chaos, and no signs of shore or boundary, but only the same ocean of transpicious space, with firmaments for its scattered islands, and such islands still rising to view on every farthest horizon. Thus accustomed to the idea of Nature as boundless, the modern mind, in one of its moods, may *refuse* to conceive it as bounded, and may regard the attempt to do so as a treason against pure truth. All this, we think, must be conceded, although the effects of the concession will not stop at *Paradise Lost*. But there are other moods of the mind, moral and spiritual moods, which poesy is bound to serve; and, just as Milton, in the interest of these, knowingly repudiated the obligation of consistency with physical science as known to himself, and set up a great symbolic phantasy, so to this day the phantasy which he did set up has, for those anyway like-minded with him, lost none of its sublime significance. For all such, is not that physical

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Universe, which we have learnt not to bound, still, in its inconceivable totality, but as a drop hung from the Empyrean; is not darkness around it; is not Hell beneath it? And what though all are not such? Is it not the highest function of a book to perpetuate like-mindedness to its author after he is gone, and may not *Paradise Lost* be doing this? Nay, and what though the relevancy of the poem to the present soul of the world should have been more impaired by the lapse of time and the change of ideas than we have admitted it to be, and though much of the interest of it, as of all the other great poems of the world, should now be *historical*? Even so, what an interest it possesses! What a portrait, what a study, of a great English mind of the seventeenth century it brings before us! "I wonder not so much at the poem itself, though worthy of all wonder," says Bentley in the preface to his edition of the poem, "as that the author could so abstract his thoughts from his own troubles as to be able to make it: that, confined in a narrow and to him a dark chamber, surrounded with cares and fears, he could expatiate at large through the compass of the whole Universe, and through all Heaven beyond it, and could survey all periods of time from before the creation to the consummation of all things. This theory, no doubt, was a great solace to him in his affliction, but it shows in him a greater strength of spirit, that made him capable of such a solace. And it would almost seem to me to be peculiar to him, had not experience by others taught me that there is that power in the human mind, supported with innocence and *conscientia virtus*, that can make it shake off all outward uneasiness and involve itself secure and pleased in its own integrity and entertainment." It is refreshing to be able to quote from the great scholar and critic words showing so deep an appreciation of the real significance of the poem which, as an editor, he mangled. Whatever else the *Paradise Lost* is, it is, as Bentley here points out, a monument of almost unexampled personal magnanimity.

It is not improbable that Milton's *blindness*, which we are apt to think of as a disqualification for poetry, as for other things, may, in the case of *Paradise Lost*, have been a positive qualification.

One can imagine many effects of blindness on the mind of a poet. Milton himself, as if with a presentiment of what was one day to be his own fate, had more than once, in his earlier poems, touched on

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very theme. Thus, in his sixth Latin Elegy, written in 1629, speaking of strictness of life, and even habits of asceticism, as necessary for all poets of the highest order, he says :—

“Hoc ritu vixisse ferunt post rapta sagacem
Lumina Tiresian,”

and then proceeds to couple the name of the seer Tiresias, in this respect, with that of the poet Homer, who was likewise blind. Again, more expressly, in the Latin lines *De Ideâ Platonicâ*, also written in youth, we have mention of the same Tiresias and his blindness thus :—

“cui profundum cæcitas lumen dedit
Dirceus augur.”

One remembers also Milton's visit of reverence to the blind Galileo, and those lines in *Paradise Lost* itself (III. 33—36) where he tells us of the secret pleasure he had in associating himself with his famous blind predecessors of the ancient world :—

“Those other two, equalled with me in fate
(So were I equalled with them in renown),—
Blind Thamyras and blind Mæonides ;
And Tiresias and Phineus, prophets old.”

As to these old poets and prophets blindness had given “the profounder insight,” might it not be so also in his case? For this at least he prays. “As I too am blind,” he continues,

“So much the rather thou, Celestial Light,
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
Inadiates ; there plant eyes ; all mist from thence
Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight.”

But not only in this semi-mystic sense, so dear to Milton, and so natural to his mode of thought,—that bodily blindness, in men like him, might perhaps be accompanied by deeper and sublimer spiritual vision, a larger gift of the real faculty of the seer,—not in this sense alone might it be contended that, in his great poem, his blindness was even a qualification. Nor yet need it be meant merely, in a more prosaic consideration, that his blindness, by shutting in his mind from external objects, concentrated it on his daring theme and left him at more liberty to pursue it. Nor, again, need we have in view only that influence which would be exerted over his poetry, and

especially over the structure and music of his verse, by the fact that his blindness prevented him from composing on paper, and compelled him to compose mentally. These and other influences of blindness may have all had effects. But the influence of which I speak is something more peculiar and specific.

The one sensation, as we may fancy, ever directly present to a blind man, that had once enjoyed sight, would be that of infinitely extended surrounding darkness or blackness. In Milton's case, we learn from himself, it was not quite so in the first years of his blindness, though it may have gradually become so afterwards. Writing, on the 28th of September 1654, to his Greek friend Philaras, in answer to a letter which Philaras had sent him, giving him hope that his blindness might not be incurable, and requesting a statement of the symptoms of his case, which Philaras might submit to the celebrated surgeon and oculist, Thevenot of Paris, Milton communicates various particulars as to the manner in which his blindness had come on, and his sensations after it had become total. It had been gradually coming on, he tells us, for ten years; the left eye had failed first; then the right, the vision of which had begun to be sensibly affected three years before the time of his then writing. Before this eye had quite failed, *i.e.* before his blindness could be called total, there had seemed to come from his shut eyes, on his lying down at night, copious bursts or suffusions of glittering light; but, as from day to day his vision faded towards extinction, these flashes of light had been exchanged for similar bursts of fainter colours, shot as with audible force from the eyes. "*Now, however,*" he adds, "as if lucency were extinct, it is a mere blackness, or a blackness dashed, and as it were inwoven, with an ashy colour (*merus nigror aut cineraceo distinctus et quasi intextus*), that is wont to pour itself forth; yet the darkness which is perpetually before me, by night as well as by day, seems always nearer to a whitish than to a blackish (*albenti semper quam nigricanti propior*), and such that, when the eye rolls itself, there is admitted, as through a small chink, a certain little trifle of light." As this was written when Milton had been blind but two years at the utmost, may we not suppose that the process of darkening which he describes had continued after 1654, and that, by the time he had begun his *Paradise Lost*, even that little chink of which he speaks had been barred, so that the medium in which he found himself, night and day, had then

less of the whitish or ash-gray in it, and more of the hue of absolute black? Such a supposition would accord with his own words in the poem (III. 41—49):—

“ Not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of Even or Morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
Or flocks or herds, or human face divine ;
But cloud instead and ever-during dark
Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men
Cut off, and, for the book of knowledge fair,
Presented with a universal blank
Of Nature's works.”

And, more decidedly, we seem to see the same suggested in the words of Samson respecting *his* blindness (*Sams. Agon.* 80, 81):—

“ O, dark, dark, dark ! amid the blaze of noon
Irrecoverably dark ; total eclipse ! ”

Now, whether the medium in which a man moved who had lost his sight were such a total opaque of infinitely extended blackness, or only a paler surrounding darkness of ashy gloom, in what would his imaginations of things physical consist? Would they not consist in carving this medium into zones, divisions and shapes, in painting phantasmagories upon it or in it, in summoning up within it or projecting into it combinations of such recollections of the once visible world as remained strongest and dearest in the memory? But are there not certain classes of images, certain kinds of visual recollection, that would be easier in such a state of blindness than others? While the recollections of minute and indifferent objects became dimmer and dimmer,—while it might be difficult for a man long blind to recall with exactness the appearance, for example, of such a flower as the violet, or the aspect of a lichen-veined seat at the root of a tree,—might not there be a compensation in the superior vividness with which certain other sensations of sight, and in particular all luminous effects, all contrasts of light and darkness, were remembered? If a blind man, that had once enjoyed sight, retained a more vivid recollection of some objects than of others, and a keener faculty in calling up their images, might they not be such objects as these: a lamp, the mouth of a furnace, the sun, the moon, a ball of red-hot iron, the ground covered with snow, the nocturnal sky studded with stars? Might not one that had become blind even excel a

person not so afflicted in all that kind of physical description which consisted in contrasts of light and darkness, of blaze and blackness, or could be effected poetically through the metaphor of luminousness?

Apply this to *Paradise Lost*. In the first place, the very scheme and conception of the poem as a whole seems a kind of revenge against blindness. It is a compulsion of the very conditions of blindness to aid in the formation of a visual phantasmagory of transcendent vastness and yet perfect exactness. That roof of a boundless Empyrean above all, beaming with indwelling light; that Chaos underneath this, of immeasurable opaque blackness; hung into this blackness by a touch from the Empyrean, our created Universe, conceived as a sphere of soft blue ether brilliant with luminaries; separated thence by an intervening belt of Chaos, and marked as a kind of antarctic zone of universal space, a lurid or dull-red Hell: in all this what else have we than the poet making districts in the infinitude of darkness in which he himself moved, and, while suffering some of the districts to remain in their native opaque, rescuing others into various contrasts of light? But not only in the total conception or diagram of the poem may this influence of blindness be traced. In the filling-up, in the imagination of what goes on within any one of the districts into which space is so marked out, or by way of the intercourse of the districts with each other, we may trace the same influence. True, there are portions of the poem where the poet, retracting his regards from the vast and the distant, occupies himself in describing this Earth, and the Eden amidst it, and the Paradise of loveliness within that Eden. By far the larger proportion of the physical descriptions in the poem is, however, of a different kind: not descriptions of landscape, nor terrestrial descriptions at all, but descriptions of phenomena and incidents in the astronomical universe, or in the realms of Heaven, Chaos, and Hell beyond that universe, or interconnecting those realms with that Universe and with Earth. Much of the action and incident consists of the congregation of Angelic Beings in bands beyond our universe, or in their motions singly towards our universe, desecrating it from afar, or in their wingings to and fro within our universe from luminary to luminary. Now, in all those portions of the poem, involving what may be called physical description of a supra-terrestrial kind, the mere contrast of darkness with light, the mere imagery of lucency,—of light in masses, streaks, gleams, particles, or discs,—goes very far. Many instances

might be given. When Satan, already half-way through Chaos, in his quest of the new Universe, ceases his temporary halt at the pavilion of Night, and, having received direction there, rises with fresh alacrity for his further ascent, how is the recommencement of his motion indicated? He (II. 1013-4)

“ Springs upward like a pyramid of fire
Into the wild expanse.”

And, when, having arrived at the new Universe and found the opening into it, he flings himself down and alights first on the Sun, how is his alighting on the body of the Sun described (III. 588—590)?

“ There lands the Fiend, a spot like which perhaps
Astronomer in the Sun’s lucent orb
Through his glazed optic tube yet never saw ”

But, even if we follow Milton into the passages of purely terrestrial description in his *Paradise Lost*,—his descriptions of Eden and what went on there,—we shall trace, if I do not mistake, some subtle action of the same influence from his blindness. These portions of the poem amount to about a fifth of the whole, and they are surpassingly beautiful. The poet revels there in a wealth of verdure and luxuriant detail, reminding us of the rich pastoral poems of his youth, when he delighted in landscape and vegetation. Take the first general description of Paradise (IV. 246—268):—

“ Thus was this place,
A happy rural seat of various view :
Groves whose rich trees wept odorous gums and balm ;
Others whose fruit, burnished with golden rind,
Hung amiable, Hesperian fables true,
If true, here only, and of delicious taste.
Betwixt them lawns, or level downs, and flocks
Grazing the tender herb, were interposed,
Or palmy hillock ; or the flowery lap
Of some irriguous valley spread her store,
Flowers of all hue, and without thorn the rose.
Another side, umbrageous grots and caves
Of cool recess, o’er which the mantling vine
Lays forth her purple grape, and gently creeps
Luxuriant ; meanwhile murmuring waters fall
Down the slope hills dispersed, or in a lake,
That to the fringed bank with myrtle crowned
Her crystal mirror holds, unite their streams.

The birds their quire apply ; airs, vernal airs,
 Breathing the smell of field and grove, attune
 The trembling leaves, while universal Pan,
 Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance,
 Led on the eternal Spring."

How richly here the blind poet's recollections of natural scenery come back to his dreams! Or take, as a more minute specimen, the description of the nuptial bower of Eve (IV. 692—703).—

" The roof

Of thickest covert was inwoven shade,
 Laurel and myrtle, and what higher grew
 Of firm and fragrant leaf ; on either side
 Acanthus, and each odorous bushy shrub,
 Fenced up the verdant wall ; each beauteous flower,
 Iris all hues, roses, and jessamine,
 Reared high their flourished heads between, and wrought
 Mosaic ; under foot the violet,
 Crocus, and hyacinth, with rich inlay
 Broidered the ground, more coloured than with stone
 Of costliest emblem."

This is beautiful too : a brave recollection of his old loves, the flowers. But, though such passages abound, showing how, after years of blindness, the poet could still walk in imagination over the variegated earth and recall its delights of form and colour for his use, it will be found, I think, that even in those passages, and much more in others, there is here and there a subtle cunning peculiar to blindness. What I mean is that, even in his descriptions of terrestrial scenes and incidents, Milton will be found, in his *Paradise Lost*, to have produced his effects with an unusual degree of frequency through the use of the possible varieties of the single metaphor of luminousness or radiance. When, for example, Ithuriel and Zephon, searching through Paradise at night, discover Satan squat like a toad at the ear of the sleeping Eve, and when Ithuriel touches him with his spear, how is the effect described (IV. 814—820)?—

" Up he starts,

Discovered and surprised. As, when a spark
 Lights on a heap of nitrous powder, laid
 Fit for the tun, some magazine to store
 Against a rumoured war, the smutty grain,
 With sudden blaze diffused, inflames the air :
 So started up, in his own shape, the Fiend."

In the sequel, Ithuriel and Zephon, leading Satan as their prisoner, bring him to the western point of the Garden, where the two subdivisions of guardian angels that have been going their rounds have just met and reformed company under Gabriel's command. There Gabriel upbraids the captive Fiend; who in his turn defies Gabriel, and waxes insolent. One of his speeches is so insolent that the whole band of Gabriel's angels instinctively begin to close round him aggressively. And how is this described (IV. 978—980)?—

“ While thus he spake, the Angelic squadron bright
Turned fiery-red, sharpening in moonèd horns
Their phalanx, and began to hem him round.”

In other words, the appearance of the angelic band, advancing in the dark to encircle Satan, was like that of the crescent moon. But throughout the poem many similar instances will be found, in which the metaphor of luminousness is made to accomplish effects that we should hardly have expected from it. We see the fond familiarity of the blind poet with the element of light in contrast with darkness, and an endless inventiveness of mode, degree, and circumstance in his fancies of this element. Throughout *Paradise Lost*, brilliance is, to a great extent, Milton's favourite synonym for beauty.¹

One question that may be asked respecting the scheme of *Paradise Lost* remains still unanswered. What extent of *time* is embraced in the story of the poem? On this question Addison is rather vague. “The modern critics,” he says, “have collected, from several hints in the *Iliad* and *Æneid*, the space of time which is taken up by the action of each of those poems; but, as a great part of Milton's story was transacted in regions that lie out of the reach of the Sun and the sphere of Day, it is impossible to gratify the reader with such a calculation, which, indeed, would be more curious than instructive.” With due deference to Addison, it is best to assume that some instruction may lurk in whatever is curious; and, if Milton *has* given any hints in his poem bearing on the question of the length of time over which the story extends, or on the more subtle question of his own notion of the applicability of the

¹ To prevent mistake, I may state that I have already, in various places, and sometimes anonymously, expressed some of the speculations given in the text as to the influence of Milton's blindness on his later poetry.

human measure of time to such a story at all, it is the business of the critic to collect them. In this respect, too, there is not the least doubt that Milton had a distinct intention.

The action of the poem opens, in the First Book, with what Milton, in the Argument to that Book, calls "the midst of things": *i.e.* with the rousing of Satan and the rest of the fallen Angels from their first stupor in Hell, and their assembling to deliberate on the policy that may be best for them in their new condition. Whatever information is given us respecting those prior events in Heaven which had brought things to this pass comes in mainly in later parts of the poem by way of retrospect. The rousing of the rebel Angels in Hell is the first event in the order of reading. That event, however, is not left undated. It was exactly *eighteen* days after the expulsion of the rebel Angels from Heaven by the Messiah. *Nine* of these days had been occupied, we are afterwards told (VI. 871—875), with their fall *into* Hell:—

" Nine days they fell. Confounded Chaos roared,
And felt tenfold confusion in their fall
Through his wild anarchy, so huge a rout
Encumbered him with ruin; Hell at last,
Yawning, received them whole, and on them closed."

But, after they had thus fallen into Hell and been inclosed within its convex, there was a second period of *nine* days, during which they lay there stunned and stupefied. This we are told at I. 50—53; where the account of Satan's first awakening from his stupor and casting round his baleful eyes in Hell is prefaced thus:—

" Nine times the space that measures day and night
To mortal men, he, with his horrid crew,
Lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gulf,
Confounded, though immortal."

Milton, it will be seen, here positively stipulates that these second nine days, during which the fallen Angels lay entranced in Hell, shall be taken as literal or human days. Indeed, there is a necessity for this which does not at once appear. For it is during those second nine days, or period of the entrancement of the outcast Angels in Hell, that Milton subsequently makes the Creation of Man's Universe to have taken place; and, as that Creation, according to his literal rendering of the Scripture narrative, is described as occupying six days, the measure of the day is intended to be the

same in both cases. There are even means for determining, by hints in the poem, those particular six days, out of the nine of Angelic stupor in Hell, during which Milton conceived the work of Creation in the Chaos above Hell to have been completed. Thus, in the Argument to the First Book, where we are told that "the poem hastes into the midst of things, presenting Satan with his Angels now fallen into Hell," it is added that Hell is "described here not in the centre," but as situated in "a place of utter darkness, fittest called Chaos": the reason for this deviation from the classical or traditional view of the place of Tartarus in space being given, parenthetically, in these words: "For Heaven and Earth may be supposed as yet not made, certainly yet not accurst." That is to say, it has to be assumed in Milton's Epic that the rebel Angels are already fallen into Hell, and closed in there, *before* there need have existed that Universe of our heavens and earth within the bounds of which Hell had been usually placed by previous poets. This is a preliminary hint to prevent mistake; but actually the poem itself tells us that the central Universe did *not* exist at the time when the rebel Angels fell through the depths of Chaos, nor till after they had been shut up for some time in that pit or nethermost section of Chaos which had been converted into a Hell. When Satan and the rest have recovered from their stupor of nine days in this new abode, they are represented (I. 650—656, and II. 345—351) as knowing, from their recollection of prophecies and rumours in Heaven, that somewhere or other, "about this time," the new World of Man must have been created; and on this knowledge or conjecture all their farther action is founded. And their conjecture is right. The work of the New Creation had been begun in the Chaos above them, and completed, or all but completed, during their stupor. For, according to Raphael's account to Adam (VII. 131, *et seq.*), it was after Satan and his legions had been driven by the Messiah's thunders down into Hell, and the Messiah had returned in triumph to his Father in the Empyrean, that the fiat for the New Creation went forth. To execute this fiat, the Son, attended by His myriads of angelic ministers, again rides forth into Chaos; where, first marking out the spherical bounds of the new Universe, or clearing its destined bulk in the body of Chaos (VII. 216—242), He then, in six successive days (VII. 243—550), brings it, and the Earth at its centre, to perfection. At the close of the sixth day, called "the seventh evening" in the

poem, all having been consummated by the creation of Man, He returns to His Father in the Empyrean, and there follows the Sabbath of rest, contemplation, and worship among all the Heavenly hosts (VII. 551—634). All this Raphael tells to Adam,—relating seemingly as one who had been an eyewitness, the acts of each of the six days, save (as afterwards appears) *one*. That day was the sixth. On that day, or on the most important portion of it, Raphael was not himself within the bounds of the New Universe; and, consequently, he had only *heard* of the crowning creation of Man on that day, and had not *witnessed* it. This we learn from his own words to Adam (VIII. 228—246) in reply to Adam's proposal to relate in return *his* recollections of his origin on the Earth. Adam, though he makes this proposal, does so chiefly with a view to prolong his conversation with the Archangel, and is naturally diffident as to the interest which *his* poor story may have for his Heavenly and all-informed guest. But Raphael reassures him, and explains why Adam's recollections of that sixth day of creation, the day of Adam's own origin, will be of special interest to him:—

“ For I that day was absent, as befell,
Bound on a voyage uncouth and obscure,
Far on excursion toward the gates of Hell,
Squared in full legion (such command we had)
To see that none thence issued forth a spy
Or enemy, while God was in His work,
Lest He, incensed at such eruption bold,
Destruction with Creation might have mixed.
Not that they durst without His leave attempt;
But us He sends upon His high behests
For state, as sovran King, and to inure
Our prompt obedience. Fast we found, fast shut,
The dismal gates, and barricadoed strong;
But, long ere our approaching, heard within
Noise, other than the sound of dance or song,—
Torment and loud lament and furious rage.
Glad we returned up to the coasts of Light
Ere Sabbath evening.”

This passage certainly implies that, in Milton's conception, that sixth day, the Friday of the creative week, on which Man was made, was also the day on which the rebel Angels, recovering from their nine days of stupor, began to bustle about in Hell. On the afternoon of that day, Raphael with his squadrons, watching at the gates of

Hell in nether Chaos, found them still fast, but could hear the tumult of the inmates within. It was while they were in their first tumult there, and the thought of the new Universe was occurring to Satan, that the gracious act which finished that Universe was going on high verhead. Nay, and that *next* day in Hell, which was spent by the Fiends in continued tumult, but in tumult organised into a council to deliberate their future policy,—was it not the same day which was spent by the hosts of the unfallen Angels in the Empyrean, Raphael amongst them after his expedition, as a Sabbath of rest, contemplation, and worship? The very Sabbath which in Heaven was spent in hymns of rejoicing over the new Universe was spent in Hell in plotting its ruin!

So far, unless we suspect obliviousness in Milton and mere casual coincidence, we must suppose that he intended an exact measure of time in the action of his poem. There are *eighteen* days between the expulsion of the rebel Angels from Heaven and the completion of the new Universe by the creation of Man: the first *nine* of these days being possibly metaphorical, but the second *nine* avowedly literal or human, days. To this he was partly obliged, as we have seen, by his adherence to the Mosaic account of the Creation. But from this point onwards, through a certain portion of the action of the poem, we find him using his poet's privilege (which the very conditions of his subject made especially legitimate in his case) of changing the rate of events, and making himself independent of consistency in his measure of time.

For example, if the deliberations in Hell took place on the nineteenth day by the above reckoning, or the first Sabbath of the new Universe, then, as one reads the account of what immediately followed these deliberations,—Satan's swift ascent to Hell-gates to perform his mission; the opening of the gates to him by Sin and Death; his toilsome journey upwards, in two main stages, through superincumbent Chaos, till he reaches the confines of the new Universe; his wanderings round the outer shell, or *primum mobile*, of that Universe, till he discerns the light of the opening into it underneath Heaven's gate at the zenith; his first view of the whole interior of the Universe from that opening; his plunging down into that interior through its successive spheres; his alighting on the body of the Sun, and conversation with Uriel there; and, finally, his winging from the Sun to the Earth, and his first contact with that planet of his search at the

top of Mount Niphates near Eden,—it might seem as if all these events, occupying a portion of the Second Book, and the whole of the Third, might well have been transacted in the course of a single day: making, let us say, the twentieth day from the point first dated. For, if Raphael had ascended from Hell-gates back to the Empyrean in but a portion of a day, so as to arrive by Sabbath-eve, might not one whole day have sufficed for the complete voyage of the ruined Archangel from Hell's depths to his alighting on our Earth at the centre of the new Universe? As one reads, it is some such conception that occurs to one, if time is thought of at all. Or if, remembering that the *fall* through Chaos into Hell had occupied nine days, and that the *ascent* might be more arduous, one were to substitute a calculation of time for the mere natural impression of the text, still one could not prolong the time of Satan's journey to Earth over more than a very moderate number of days. Yet, in the sequel, a considerable lapse of time in this part of the general action of the poem is found to be necessary. If Satan arrived on the Earth in but one day's flight from Hell, Adam and Eve had been but two days in existence when his machinations for their ruin began. Created on Friday, if we may speak so definitely, they were but in the first Sunday or Monday of their life. Or, even if Satan's journey to Earth should be calculated at nine days, or twice nine days, the first man and woman were still but new to Eden when he arrived. But the whole tenor of their subsequent story assumes that their Paradisaic life had for some time been going on, and that the Mundane Universe had been wheeling for some time in quiet beauty, diurnal and nocturnal, round the central Earth which bore them, before the advent of the Fiend. Thus, in that first dialogue of the happy pair which the Fiend overhears as soon as he has descended from Niphates into Eden, and found his way into Paradise, Eve is made to say to Adam (IV. 449—452):—

“That day I oft remember, when from sleep
I first awaked, and found myself reposed,
Under a shade, on flowers, much wondering where
And what I was.”

This language, it is evident, would be at fault unless the day so remembered by Eve were supposed to be at a considerable distance; and, if Eve were supposed to have been only two days in existence,

it would be absurd. Again, Eve is made to say, addressing Adam (IV. 639, 640):—

“ With thee conversing, I forget all time,
All seasons and their change ; all please alike.”

Here, even if the word “seasons” should be interpreted, by the rest of the passage, as meaning only different times of the day, and changing aspects of morning and evening, in sunlight, shower, or starlight, the implication certainly is that there had been a considerable experience of those phenomena. And so in many other places where Adam himself talks : particularly in his narrative to Raphael of his recollections of his first awakening to life, and of Eve’s presence beside him (VIII. 250—559). In short, Milton assumed that the Paradisaic life had lasted some time before the arrival of the Fiend to put an end to it.

Unless we revert to the supposition that Milton was oblivious in all this (which is very unlikely), we must accept the inconsistency as intentional. By the very nature of his poem, Milton was bound to the human measure of time only for events within our astronomical Universe. For events in the regions transcending that Universe, in the Empyrean, in Chaos, or in Hell, --he might take a transcendental measure of time, or none at all. True, for the purpose of making certain events in those transcendent regions *contemporary*, to the human imagination, with the Biblical week during which our Universe was evolved into being, he had dared to fit on the human measure of time to a special period of the vast transactions of the infinitude surrounding the World. He had marked out *eighteen or nineteen* days during which, or at least during the last nine or ten of them, the imagination might apply the human measure of time even to those transactions. But, this over, he resumes his poetic liberty, and lapses into a vagueness as to time, a discrepancy between the rate of things within our Universe and the rate of things beyond it. All that had taken place *beyond* the Universe, from that Sabbath of contemplative admiration in Heaven over the finished creation and of diabolic scheming against it down in Hell, had taken place at a different rate from that at which things went on *within* it. That journey of Satan upwards through Chaos on his fatal errand, and that dialogue between the Father and Son in Heaven as to the redemption of the World from the consequences of Satan’s foreseen

success (III. 56—415), have to be conceived according to a transcendental measure of time. As we read of Satan's expedition up through Chaos, it seems as if a day were sufficient for it; but, when his journey is ended, and we stand with him on the top of Niphates, lo! the Earth has been for many a day in the midst of the wheeling spheres, and that Sabbath which we thought to be but yesterday is a long way in the distance.

From the moment, however, that the action of the poem begins to be on Earth, the ordinary measure of time is resumed. However long the Earth had been in existence in the midst of the sphyry system, and however long Adam and Eve had been becoming familiar with Paradise, and with each other, on that fatal day when Satan alighted on the top of Niphates, the story from that time forward is comprised within a definite number of ordinary days and nights. The following is the scheme of time, from the arrival of Satan on the Earth at the end of Book III., on to the close of the poem :—

First Day.—Satan, who has alighted on Niphates exactly at *noon* (IV. 29—31), spends the rest of that day in surveying Eden from the mountain-top, in descending into Eden, and in making his way into Paradise in the neighbourhood of Adam and Eve. It is towards *evening* when he first sees them and listens to their conversation (IV. 331, and IV. 355); he leaves them for a while at *sunset* (IV. 536—543), and roams through Paradise; but at *night* he is found by Ithuriel and Zephon in Eve's nuptial bower, squat like a toad, and insinuating dreams into her ear. Arrested, and brought, in his own shape, before Gabriel and the rest of the night-watch of angels, about or shortly after *midnight*, he listens to Gabriel's denunciations, replies defiantly, and then, towards *daybreak* (IV. 1014, 1015), hurries away in a permitted flight. Book IV. contains the whole action of this day.

Second Day.—This day spreads over no less than four Books of the poem, viz. Books V., VI., VII., and VIII. For, Eve having awoke in the *morning*, troubled with her dream, and Adam having comforted her, and the two having gone forth to their work in the Garden, the Archangel Raphael, who has been sent down from Heaven to warn them of their danger, arrives at *noon*, when their day's work is over (V. 299—301); and the rest of the day is taken up with his long colloquy with Adam. It is into this colloquy that Milton has inwoven, by way of retrospect, much that is essential to

his story: the account of the rebellion and wars in Heaven, of the defeat and expulsion of the rebel Angels, of the creation of the New Universe, etc. The colloquy is protracted till *evening*, when (VIII. 652, 653) Raphael departs.

Interval of Six Days.—During the six days following the departure of Raphael we are left to suppose Adam and Eve still in their happiness, and going about their duties in Paradise. We are left to suppose this; for we have no account of those days, save that we learn afterwards (IX. 53—69) that Satan had not quitted the Earth, but was all the while circling it, and meditating his re-approach to the innocent pair. He had fled at *night* on the first day; and it was not till the *eighth* night from that, inclusively, that he thought it prudent to return. During those seven days he had not ceased going round and round the globe: adjusting his circuits, however, so as always to be in Night, or within the Earth's shadow, lest Uriel, the Angel of the Sun, whom he had deceived once, and who was now on the alert, should be aware of his movements.

Ninth Day.—This is the day of the Temptation and the Fall. On the previous *night*,—*i.e.* on the night of what, in our present reckoning, is the *eighth* day,—Satan, having returned from compassing the Earth, has re-entered Paradise (IX. 67—75), and hidden himself in the Serpent (IX. 179—191), waiting for the *morning*. When the *morning* comes, Adam and Eve come forth to begin the new day (IX. 192—199). Adam at length yielding to her request that they should betake themselves separately to their tasks in the Garden, the Serpent has the opportunity of tempting Eve alone. It is about *noon* (IX. 739) when he succeeds in making her eat of the forbidden fruit (IX. 780, 781). Adam's participation in the sin (IX. 995—998), and the mutual upbraidings and shame which follow the act, and conclude Book IX., are to be supposed as filling up the *afternoon*. But the incidents of the same fatal day extend into Book X. It is still but the *evening* of the same day when the Son comes down from Heaven into Paradise (X. 90—102) to pronounce judgment on the trembling pair. From the terms of the judgment Adam learns that it was not to be as might have been feared from the original threatening, "*In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*"; but that, though on that very day the liability to death had been incurred, the actual stroke was deferred (X. 209—211). Left again to themselves, the unhappy pair spend

the *night* in sad discourses. This we learn only incidentally, by being told that Satan, who had slunk away into a wood immediately after the temptation of Eve, and had thence seen the events of the *afternoon*, but had fled terrified in the *evening* on beholding the descent of the Son of God, had returned in the *night*, and had then gathered from the sad talk of Adam and Eve the nature of his own doom (X. 332—344).

Tenth Day.—There is a difficulty about this day. Addison and other critics omit it altogether, and suppose the whole of Book X. to be but a continuation of the Ninth Day, or the day of the Fall and the subsequent evening and night. Examination, however, will prove that the poem assumes at least one complete day and night as having been spent by Adam and Eve in Paradise after the day of their fall and the immediately following night of their first sad discourse on the consequences. Thus, Sin and Death, whom Satan had left at Hell-gates, eager to follow him if his enterprise should succeed (II. 865—870), and who *had* followed him, and not only followed him, but built in their track through Chaos that wondrous bridge or causeway which was thenceforth permanently to connect Hell with the new Universe (II. 1024—1033, and X. 229—311),—these two horrible visitants from Hell had just completed their strange labour of engineering, and fastened the end of their bridge on the outside shell of the new Universe near the opening under Heaven's gate, when they behold Satan emerging in radiant triumph out of the starry involutions of the new Universe on his way back to Hell to report his victory (X. 312—331). Now, although the transit of Sin and Death from Hell-gate to the new Universe is an extra-mundane event, and need not have the mundane measure of time applied to it, yet Satan's appearance to them, being within the extreme mundane limits, has a time assigned to it. What is that time? It is at what would be *sunrise* on the Earth (X. 329),—*i.e.* the *morning* immediately following the night after the Fall. Satan is then returning in exultation to Hell, to carry thither the news of his success. The rest of his journey thither, and what occurred in Hell on his arrival (X. 410—584), are extra-mundane, and may or may not be referred to the same day. To this day, however, must be referred the descent of Sin and Death, after their parting from Satan, into the Mundane Universe, their arrival in Paradise and their dialogue there (X. 585—613); and to the same day, necessarily, also those modi-

fications for the worse of the physical arrangements of the Mundane Universe which were decreed by the Almighty in consequence of its moral ruin (X. 613—706). It is in the *night* of the same day that we have Adam's long soliloquy of lamentation (X. 714—862, especially lines 845, 846), followed by that discourse with Eve which, beginning with new upbraidings on his part, ends in their reconciliation and joint prayers to Heaven (X. 863—1104). It is precisely, however, with respect to this soliloquy of Adam, "through the still night," and the subsequent dialogue with Eve till morning, that the difficulty has been felt by commentators. There are phrases in both the soliloquy and the dialogue which, at first sight, seem to imply that this sleepless night of misery was the night immediately after the Fall. See lines 773, 811, and 962. But this would not be consistent with the fact that the soliloquy and dialogue are plainly announced (X. 714—716) to have taken place *after* Sin and Death had arrived on the Earth and begun to work their destructive effects on vegetation and animal life there, and also *after* those physical derangements of the Universe by Almighty decree which brought in tempests, and cold, and noxious planetary influences: both which sets of events are distinctly represented as *subsequent* to Satan's exit from the Universe on the morning after the day of the Fall. Either, then, the phrases in question are not to be interpreted literally (and, after all, they need not be so), or it must be assumed that Milton *was* oblivious in this particular instance, and forgot that he had already disposed of the night immediately following the Fall, and the day succeeding that night. It does not seem impossible to me that, in composing the poem, he did originally intend to refer Adam's long soliloquy and the dialogue with Eve to the night immediately following the Fall. This is the more probable because we are told that on that night immediately following the Fall the hapless pair did hold sad discourse together (X. 341—343), and because there is a coincidence between their actual discourse as we have it on the subsequent night and what we are told was their discourse *then*. Satan, we are told, had gathered the nature of his doom from their discourse on the first night; but there is a passage in their discourse on the second night exactly such as would have conveyed this information to him (X. 1030—1040). May not Milton, then, have originally intended this second night's discourse as it now stands to have been the sad discourse of the first night to which Satan listened,

and may not the interposition of the intervening events have been an afterthought? In any case we are now obliged, as the poem stands, to suppose a night, and then a whole day, and then another night, to have been passed by Adam and Eve in Paradise after their sin. One may even find, if one chooses to do so, a poetic fitness in the haziness with which, so far as Adam and Eve are concerned, the record of this time of their wretchedness is kept. One night passes over them woefully talking together; the next day, while the world is growing darker and less lovely around them, they are apart somewhere, as if separately stunned and in horror; and, on the second night, when, after Adam's long recovering lamentation by himself, Eve re-approaches him and they converse, it still seems as if it were but the one protracted night after the day of their guilt.

Eleventh Day.—This is the day of the expulsion from Paradise. We had already been informed (X. 1069—1070) that the previous night's converse of Adam and Eve had been protracted till day-break, and this information is repeated (XI. 133—140). It is now, therefore, the *morning* of the Eleventh Day. Adam and Eve have just ended their orisons and found themselves comforted, but are again perplexed by strange omens of an alteration in nature, when the Archangel Michael, who has been sent down with an Angelic band to perform the expulsion, appears within the Garden (XI. 208—250). He announces the errand on which he has come, and we have the lamentations of Adam and Eve at the prospect of having to leave their native ground (XI. 251—333). But Michael has it in charge to fortify Adam, first of all, with a vision of the future of the human race, and the hope of the ultimate restoration to be effected in the Incarnate Son. Accordingly, while Eve is left asleep below, the Archangel and Adam ascend the hill-top; whence, in a vision, which the Archangel interprets, Adam looks forward through the coming ages, seeing human history evolve itself, first to the Flood, and thence onward more rapidly, through the annals of the Jewish nation, to the advent of Christ. The account of this vision, and of Michael's interpretation of it to Adam, extends from XI. 366 to XII. 605. The last experience of Adam within his *Paradise Lost* may be said, therefore, to be the hope thus revealed to him of *Paradise Regained*: of Satan, Sin, and Death revanquished, and the World renewed for ever by the "one greater Man" of promise, his own descendant in the flesh, and yet the Lord of all things. The

day, it may be supposed, is far spent when, after this long vision, the Archangel and Adam descend the hill, and find Eve awaiting them at the foot. The flaming ministers of terror having meanwhile taken possession of Paradise, Michael executes his final duty. Leading Adam and Eve direct to the eastern gate, and through it, and then down to the plain beneath, he there leaves them. Behind them all the eastern side of Paradise is ablaze, the burning brand waving over it to prevent return, and the gate thronged with dreadful faces and fiery arms. And so the poem closes with this last glimpse of the outcasts:—

“Some natural tears they dropt, but wiped them soon :
The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide,
They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way.”

SECTION IV.

ON THE QUESTION OF MILTON'S INDEBTEDNESS IN “PARADISE LOST” TO PARTICULAR MODERN AUTHORS.

Voltaire, in 1727, suggested that Milton had, while in Italy in 1638-9, seen performed there a Scriptural drama, entitled *Adamo*, written by a certain Giovanni Battista Andreini, and that, “piercing through the absurdity of the performance to the hidden majesty of the subject,” he “took from that ridiculous trifle the first hint of the noblest work which the human imagination has ever attempted.”¹ The Andreini thus recalled to notice was the son of an Italian actress, and was known in Italy and also in France as a writer of comedies and religious poems, and also of some defences of the Drama. He was born in 1578, and, as he did not die till 1652,

¹ Essay on Epic Poetry, originally written by Voltaire in English during his stay in London, afterwards translated into French, and now included, in an amended form, in Voltaire's Collected Works, with the title, “*Essai sur la Poésie Épique*.” One chapter of the essay is devoted to Milton. It is a slight thing, showing no real knowledge of Milton's life; and the statement about Andreini, with which the chapter opens, is made in this off-hand manner: “Milton, voyageant en Italie dans sa jeunesse, vit représenter à Milan une comédie,” etc. Where Voltaire had picked up the fact he does not tell us. I fancy it was a sheer guess of his own put as a fact.

may have been of some reputation in Italy as a living author at the time of Milton's visit. His *Adamo*, of which special mention is made, was published at Milan in 1613, again at Milan in 1617; and there was a third edition of it at Perugia in 1641. It is a drama in Italian verse, in five Acts, representing the Fall of Man. Among the characters, besides Adam and Eve, are God the Father, the Archangel Michael, Lucifer, Satan, Beelzebub, the Serpent, and various allegoric personages, such as the Seven Mortal Sins, the World, the Flesh, Famine, Despair, Death. There are also choruses of Seraphim, Cherubim, Angels, Phantoms, and Infernal Spirits. From specimens which have been given, it appears that the play, though absurd enough on the whole to justify the way in which Voltaire speaks of it, is not destitute of vivacity and other merits, and that, if Milton did read it, or see it performed, he may have retained a pretty strong recollection of it.

The hint that Milton might have been indebted to Andreini for the first idea of his poem, or for its general scheme, opened up one of those literary questions in which ferrets among old books, and critics of more ingenuity than judgment, delight to lose themselves. The question has been so much written about, and has taken such large dimensions in consequence of successive attempts to raise it in new forms, that some further notice of it will be expected here.

The question of Milton's indebtedness to others for the original idea of his great epic, or for anything of real moment in its scheme and substance, is a very different question, it may be observed in the first place, from that of his indebtedness in the poem to previous writers for casual suggestions or turns of thought and phrase. The hunt for minute parallelisms of thought and expression, in Milton as in any other great author, is a perfectly legitimate form of critical industry for those who take pleasure in it; and *Paradise Lost* offers itself as the most tempting of possible fields for this kind of exercise. Whatever else it may be, it is, as we have already had occasion to remark with some emphasis in Section II. of this Introduction, undoubtedly one of the most *learned* poems in the world. It is the work of a man who, before he projected it, had been, avowedly, a diligent student of the whole round of the Greek and Latin classics, of Mediæval Latin books of all sorts, of the Hebrew Bible and commentaries upon it, and of all that was best in the modern literatures of France and Italy, in addition to all that was good, bad, or

indifferent in the accumulated literature of his own English speech. Moreover, at the very time when he first meditated *Paradise Lost*, and announced to the public his design of some such great English poem, had he not intimated that he did not consider his acquisitions of the requisite learning even then completed, and that he purposed, among his preparations for his task, some further amount of "industrious and select reading"? That was in 1641, when he had still eleven years left of the use of his eyesight. Through those eleven years, as we know, there *was* much additional reading of kinds that, whether undertaken in the direct interest of *Paradise Lost* or not, must ultimately have been useful in the poem. Nor, as we know, was this all. After complete blindness had fallen upon Milton in 1652, and through those seven years of his continued absolute blindness, from 1658 to 1665, when he was engaged on his poem steadily or intermittently, he still maintained, as we have seen, by an extraordinary ingenuity in the use of the eyes and voices of others, his commerce with books. We actually find him, when he could himself deal with books by touch only, ordering from France certain volumes of the Collective Parisian Edition of the Byzantine Historians to complete the set of those Greek folios already in his library, and also negotiating for the purchase for him, in Amsterdam, of a costly new Atlas or collection of maps. Recollecting all this, one can have no fault to find, I repeat, with that species of Miltonic criticism which would inquire into the use made by Milton in his *Paradise Lost* of materials derived from his multifarious readings, and would trace parallelisms of thought and expression in the poem with the thoughts and expressions of previous poems, ancient or modern. Though the industry has certainly been overdone, in its main directions, by past labours in it, and though it is, on the whole, an enfeebling one for the minds of those whom it engrosses, there is no reason why it should even yet be altogether stopped.

The question which Voltaire raised so innocently by his casual remark or guess about Andreini is, however, much more extensive, and affects Milton's originality in a much more vital manner, than that just described. In its extreme form, it goes beyond anything that Voltaire intended by his innocent guess, and asserts Milton's indebtedness not merely to some one particular modern book for the first idea of his *Paradise Lost*, but to a whole shelf of particular modern books for the plan of the poem, or portions of that plan, and for

many of its finest and most striking individual passages. The person who made himself most notorious for the advocacy of this extreme form of the speculation respecting Milton's indebtedness to previous or contemporary modern authors was another of those scholarly Scots who are so numerous in the earlier stages of the Milton tradition. He was a Scot of a different type, however, from either the worthy Patrick Hume, or the worthy Gulielmus Hogæus, already mentioned.

From about the year 1730 there had been living in Edinburgh, as a teacher of Latin, a certain sallow-faced, loud-voiced, violent-tempered man, named William Lauder, who had been permanently lamed by an accident. He was employed for some time in teaching the Latin classes in the University as a substitute for the Latin Professor; and, in 1734, when that Professor died, he became a candidate for the post. Though recommended as "a fit person to teach Humanity in any school or college whatever," he failed in his application; and this, followed by a similar disappointment in his application for the University Librarianship, seems to have soured him. He lived on in Edinburgh, however, still as a private teacher of the classics, and in considerable repute as one of a knot of scholars, with Ruddiman in their centre, then known in the Scottish capital. With some assistance from Ruddiman and others, he brought out, in 1739, from Ruddiman's press, a handsome book in two octavo volumes, entitled *Poetarum Scotorum Muse Sacre*. It consisted of a new edition of the Latin Translation of the Psalms and the Song of Solomon by Arthur Johnston, the most celebrated of the Scottish Latinists after Buchanan, together with other reproduced specimens of approved Scottish Latinity, older or later, including the Poems of Archbishop Adamson, and those Paraphrases of Job and Ecclesiastes which had been published in London in 1682 by the unfortunate William Hog. Among the editorial additions were Latin lives of Johnston and Adamson, with a note expressing regret that nothing more had been ascertained about Hog than that he had lived long in London, and, besides translating Job and Ecclesiastes, had published Latin Paraphrases of the *Paradise Lost*, the *Paradise Regained*, and the *Samson Agonistes*, of John Milton, the celebrated English poet ("*Joannis Miltoni Angli, poetæ celeberrimi*"). Lauder had high expectations of profit from his book, founded on a petition he had sent in to the General Assembly of the Scottish Church, request-

ing that body to recommend or authorise the use of Johnston's Latin Psalms, and another portion of the contents of the book, in all the schools of Scotland. But, though the Commission of the General Assembly did, on the 13th of November 1740, grant the prayer of the petition, nothing came of it; and, having been disappointed in a subsequent application, in 1742, for the Mastership of the Grammar School of Dundee, Lauder resolved to transfer himself to London. He seems, by this time, to have earned the reputation of being, though a good scholar, an ill-conditioned and unsafe kind of person.

Lauder had been in London for some time when the issue of Newton's proposals for a new and annotated edition of *Paradise Lost* excited him greatly. In interviews with Newton he denounced Milton as a plagiarist, offering to prove it; and, this not sufficing, he began in January 1747 a series of articles in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, propounding his discovery, and supporting his charge against Milton by quotations of parallel passages from out-of-the-way Latin books. The papers caused an unusual stir among the London critics: some of them very sceptical, and even retorting on Lauder in the Magazine or elsewhere as a mere carping Zoilus, but others inclining to the belief that he had made out a fair case. Among these latter was Dr. Johnson, then only Mr. Samuel Johnson, but already in full literary celebrity, and engaged on his great Dictionary. So sympathetic was Johnson in the main with Lauder's views that, when Lauder brought them out in a more complete state, in a volume published in 1750, with a dedication to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and with the title *An Essay on Milton's Use and Imitation of the Moderns in his Paradise Lost*, Johnson had a hand in the book. He contributed the Preface; the opening words of which are so characteristic that they may be here quoted. "It is "now more than half a century," Lauder is made to say, but it is Johnson that speaks, "since the *Paradise Lost*, having broke through "the cloud with which the unpopularity of the author for a time "obscured it, has attracted the general admiration of mankind, who "have attempted to compensate the error of their first neglect by "lavish praises and boundless veneration. There seems to have "arisen a contest among men of genius and literature who should "most advance its honour or best distinguish its beauties. Some "have revised editions, others have published commentaries; and "all have endeavoured to make their particular studies in some

“degree subservient to this general emulation. Among the inquiries to which this ardour of criticism has naturally given occasion, none is more obscure in itself, or more worthy of rational curiosity, than a retrospection of the progress of this mighty genius in the construction of his work: a view of the fabric gradually rising, perhaps from small beginnings, till its foundation rests in the centre and its turrets sparkle in the skies; to trace back the structure, through all its varieties, to the simplicity of its first plan; to find what was first projected, whence the scheme was taken, how it was improved, by what assistance it was executed, and from what stores the materials were collected, whether its founder dug them from the quarries of nature, or demolished other buildings to embellish his own.” Besides the Preface, Johnson contributed a special *Postscript* to the volume, full of the same Johnsonian generosity. Newton’s great new edition of the *Paradise Lost* had just been published; and Johnson had noted in Newton’s *Life of Milton*, prefixed to that edition, the fact that Milton’s granddaughter, Elizabeth Foster, was then still alive, in very poor circumstances, she and her husband keeping a small chandler’s shop in Cock Lane, near Shore-ditch Church. “That this relation is true,” said the *Postscript* to Lauder’s volume, “cannot be questioned, but surely the honour of letters, the dignity of sacred poetry, the spirit of the English nation, require that it should be true no longer. In an age in which statues are erected to the honour of this great writer, in which his effigy has been diffused on medals, and his work propagated by translations and illustrated by commentaries; in an age which, amidst all its vices and all its follies, has not become infamous for want of charity: it may be, surely, hoped that the *living* remains of Milton will be no longer suffered to languish in distress. It is yet in the power of a great people to reward the poet whose name they boast, and from their alliance to whose genius they claim some kind of superiority to every other nation of the earth,—that poet whose works may possibly be read when every other monument of British greatness shall be obliterated: to reward him, not with pictures or with medals,—which, if he sees, he sees with contempt,—but with tokens of gratitude which he, perhaps, may even now consider as not unworthy the regard of an immortal spirit. And, surely, to those who refuse their names to no other scheme of expense, it will not be unwelcome that a subscription is proposed for relieving,

“in the languor of age, the pains of disease, and the contempt of poverty, the granddaughter of the Author of PARADISE LOST. Nor can it be questioned that, if I, who have been marked out as the Zoilus of Milton, think this regard due to his posterity, the design will be warmly seconded by those whose lives have been employed in discovering his excellencies and extending his reputation.” As the last sentence shows, it is Lauder himself that is supposed to be speaking, and it must have been sorely against his will. Johnson, one sees, had compelled him to accept this *Postscript* to his book, as well as the Preface to it, if Johnson’s hand was to be in it at all; and, actually, in the last page of Lauder’s book there was an advertisement that subscriptions would be received for the relief of Milton’s granddaughter at four London publishing-houses, one of them that of Messrs. Payne and Bouquet in Paternoster Row, Lauder’s own publishers.

In extraordinary contrast with the Johnsonian Preface and Postscript to Lauder’s volume was that whole interior substance of it which belonged to Lauder himself. It consisted of 164 pages, exhibiting Milton’s supposed borrowings from a number of specified modern authors. First in the list came the German Jesuit Jacobus Masenius, respecting whom modern Bibliographical Dictionaries inform us that he was born in 1606 and died in 1681, and was therefore strictly Milton’s contemporary. Lauder’s description of him is “Jacobus Masenius, professor of Rhetoric and Poetry at Cologne about 1650, who wrote a poem entitled *Sarcotidos Libri Quinque*, consisting of about 2500 lines.” It is on this *Sarcotis* of the German Jesuit, a poem in Latin hexameters, published at Cologne in 1652 (the first three books of it reported, however, as having been first published there in 1644), that Lauder lays stress. He gives an abstract or analysis of the first three books, showing that they treat of the Creation, Paradise, Satan, the Fall, etc.; and he proceeds to give extracts from these books, in the original Latin, and with English metrical versions, comparing them with passages in Milton’s poem, and defying the reader to avoid the inference that Milton copied from Masenius. Next, at somewhat less length, he makes a similar challenge with respect to the *Adamus Exul* of Hugo Grotius, a juvenile work of that great Dutchman, in the form of a Latin tragedy, first published in 1601. Was it likely that Milton, who had himself seen and conversed with Grotius in 1638, when he was Swedish

ambassador at Paris, should have remained unacquainted with this juvenile performance of the great scholar, consisting as it did of a dramatic dialogue in Iambic trimeters, in which Satan, an Angel, Adam and Eve, and God's Voice are the speakers, with interspersed choruses in different metres? That Milton did *not* remain unacquainted with it was argued by the production of some of the passages which Milton was alleged to have appropriated. After the Dutchman Grotius in Lauder's list of those from whom Milton had borrowed comes Lauder's own countryman, Andrew Ramsay, one of the ministers of Edinburgh from 1614 to 1649, and Professor of Divinity in the University of Edinburgh from 1620 to 1626. By certain *Poemata Sacra*, first published at Edinburgh in 1633, and afterwards included in the collected *Delitiae Poetarum Scotorum* in 1637, Ramsay had taken a place of distinction among the Scottish Latinists; and, the chief of those poems of his being in the form of four short books of Latin hexameters, treating of the Creation, Man in a State of Innocence, the Fall, and the Redemption, Lauder quotes a passage or two from it, and insists generally on Milton's obligations to Ramsay. He was also under obligations, Lauder goes on to argue, to another Scot,—that Alexander Ross (1590 - 1654) who is embalmed immortally for his voluminousness in one of the rhymes of *Hudibras*. Among the innumerable writings of this Ross had there not been a *Virgilius Evangelicans*, published in London in 1638, and consisting, as Lauder describes it, of "a compendious history of the Old and New Testament in Virgil's language and versification"? Extracts are given to prove Milton's debt to this book also. Then Lauder passes to a less familiar Caspar Staphorstius, a Dutch divine, who had published in 1655, at Dordrecht, a *Triumphus Pacis*, or congratulatory poem on the conclusion in that year of a Peace between the States of Holland and the English Commonwealth. Milton, as Secretary to Oliver at the time, could not, Lauder contends, but have heard of this poem of Staphorstius; and passages are quoted to show that he borrowed sentiments and descriptions from it. By this time Lauder has filled 111 pages; and he skims more lightly, therefore, over the following books, all enumerated, and quoted from, as having been laid under contribution by Milton for something or other: the *Paradisus* of the Dutch Caspar Barlaeus, published in 1643, and consisting of a Latin version of one of the pieces of the old Dutch vernacular poet, Jacob Cats; the *Christus Triumphans*,

Comœdia Apocalyptica, of the Martyrologist, John Foxe, published in 1596; a Tragedy, entitled *Theocrisis*, by Johannes Franciscus Quintianus, published among his works in 1514; the *Abrahamus Sacrificans* of Theodore Beza, originally written in French, but published in Latin in 1599; the *Sedechias* of Carolus Malapertius, a Scriptural Tragedy, published in 1634; the *Herodes Infanticida* of Daniel Heinsius, published in 1636; Phineas Fletcher's Latin Satire against the Jesuits, entitled *Locustæ*, published about 1640 (Lauder's dating, but 1627 is the proper date); and the *Baptistes* of George Buchanan, of which an English translation, attributed by some to Milton himself, appeared in London in 1641. No fewer than thirteen creditors of Milton in all have thus been mentioned; but Lauder, before he ends, brings up the number to eighteen by the addition of five more. Three of these are referred to rather briefly: Baptista Mantuanus, the Italian Latinist (1448—1516), for his popular *Eclogæ*; the English Thomas Heywood, for his *Hierarchy of the Blessed Angels*, published in 1635; and Peter Du Moulin, the Elder, for his *In Symbolum Apostolorum Hymni*, published in 1640. Larger space is assigned to the remaining two. A certain Frederic Taubmann (1565—1613), called by Lauder "the celebrated Fredericus Taubmannus, professor of Poetry and Eloquence in the University of Wittemberg," had in his youth begun a poem, entitled *Bellum Angelicum*, in which the War of the Angels was to be treated in three Books of Latin hexameters, but had left only 900 lines actually accomplished. How liberally Milton had availed himself of that fragment, especially in the Sixth Book of his Epic, Lauder professed to show by several pages of extracts. Finally, and at about equal length, he illustrates Milton's special indebtedness to that excessively popular English book of his childhood and youth, *Sylvester's Du Bartas*, i.e. Joshua Sylvester's Translation of the "Divine Weekes and Workes" of the French Protestant poet Du Bartas.

All through Lauder's exposition one remarks the bitterness of his antipathy to Milton personally. This was shown, indeed, in the motto chosen ironically for the title-page of the volume. That motto was Milton's own line, "*Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme*," used in the first paragraph of his Epic as describing its intended matter. Reverting to that line, at a convenient point, Lauder asks, "Have not mankind, by giving too implicit a faith to this bold assertion, been deluded into a false opinion of Milton's being more

"an original author than any poet ever was before him? And what but this opinion, and this only, has been the cause of that infinite tribute of veneration that has been paid to him these sixty years past?" But, the veil having now been torn away, posterity thenceforth would know Milton in his true character, as one of the greatest plagiarists in the world, and even a mean plagiarist! Lauder even insinuates that Milton's reason for not allowing his daughters to understand the languages of the books which they read to him mechanically was to keep secret from them the fact of his filchings; and he finds that Edward Phillips, who could not be so easily kept out of the secret, took pains, in his *Theatrum Poetarum*, published in 1675, to conceal the extent of his deceased uncle's acquaintance with some of the authors there mentioned.

Lauder's Essay seems to have been successful for some, at least, of his immediate purposes. One of these was indicated by an *Advertisement* on one of its pages in these terms: "Gentlemen who are desirous to secure their children from ill examples by a domestic education, or are themselves inclined to gain or to retrieve the knowledge of the Latin tongue, may be waited on at their own houses by the author of the following essay, upon the receipt of a letter directed to the publisher, or the author at the corner house, the bottom of Ayre-street, Piccadilly. *N.B.* Mr. Lauder's abilities and industry in his profession can be well attested by persons of the first rank in literature in this metropolis." Whether the essay brought him many pupils one does not know; but a subscription was soon on foot for a collective edition by him of some of the rarer Latin books to which he had called attention.

Several persons, however, had been on Lauder's track, and one of them spoke out in an absolutely crushing manner. This was the Rev. John Douglas, then a Shropshire clergyman, afterwards Bishop of Salisbury. In a tract published in 1751, in the form of a letter to his patron the Earl of Bath, and with the title *Milton no Plagiary; or, A Detection of the Forgeries contained in Lauder's Essay on the Imitations in the Paradise Lost*, Mr. Douglas proved that Lauder, in his professed quotations from the authors from whom Milton was said to have plagiarised, had tampered outrageously with the texts. It was shown that in one quotation from Staphorstius the only lines that really corresponded with anything in *Paradise Lost* were eight lines not occurring in the text of Staphorstius at all, but foisted into

that text from—who could have supposed such audacity?—William Hog's Latin Paraphrase of *Paradise Lost* itself, of date 1690, where they occurred as a translation of five lines of Milton's own English. It was shown that another very emphatic line quoted from Staphorstius as actually identical with a line in Milton was not in Staphorstius, but was the same Hogæus's Latin rendering of that very line in Milton. Similarly it was shown that an important passage from Hogæus had been interpolated by Lauder into a professed quotation from Masenius, and that, in fact, one of Lauder's processes had been to take bits of Milton himself as they stood in the Latin of his translator Hog, and insert them into the passages from Latin authors produced as samples of Milton's dexterity in stealing. In the case of one quotation from Taubmann, where the interpolated matter could not be traced to Hogæus, it was shown that it must have been invented by Lauder himself, translating for the nonce into Latin the very passage of Milton which he wanted to prove that Milton had borrowed. Other tamperings with the texts of Lauder's professed quotations were pointed out; and, though Mr. Douglas's tract was brief in comparison with Lauder's Essay, and did not go over all Lauder's ground, the general effect was that of two or three well-aimed and powerful shots upon a crazy fabric.

Never was there such a collapse. Lauder's publishers, Messrs. Payne and Bouquet, hastened to disown him. They sent out an announcement, dated 1st December 1750, declaring that, having asked for his defence, and received nothing more satisfactory than an acknowledgment of the charge against him, with an expression of his wonder at the folly of the public in making "such an extraordinary rout" about such a trifle, they had broken all connexion with him, and would thenceforth sell his book only as "a curiosity of fraud and interpolation which all the ages of literature cannot parallel." Hardly had this disclaimer appeared when there came out in print, in Lauder's own name ("By William Lauder, A.M.," are the words on the title-page, where the publisher's name is given as "W. Owen, at Homer's Head, near Temple Bar"), a quarto pamphlet of 24 pages, in the form of "*A Letter to the Reverend Mr. Douglas, occasioned by his Vindication of Milton*," dated "Dec. 29, 1750." It is the most complete and abject confession possible of Lauder's delinquencies. "I will not so far dissemble my weakness or 'my fault,'" says the author, addressing Mr. Douglas, "as not to

“confess that my wish was to have passed undetected; but, since
“it has been my fortune to fail in my original design, to have the
“suppositious passages which I have inserted in my quotations
“made known to the world, and the shade which began to gather
“on the splendour of Milton totally dispersed, I cannot but count
“it an alleviation of my pain that I have been defeated by a man
“who knows how to use advantages with so much moderation, and
“can enjoy the honour of conquest without the insolence of triumph.
“It was one of the maxims of the Spartans not to press upon a
“flying enemy, and therefore their enemies were always ready to
“quit the field, because they knew the danger was only in opposing.
“The civility with which you have thought proper to treat me
“when you had incontestable superiority has inclined me to make
“your victory complete without any further struggle, and not only
“publickly to acknowledge the truth of the charge which you have
“hitherto advanced, but to confess, without the least dissimulation,
“subterfuge, or concealment, every other interpolation I have made
“in those authors which you have not yet had opportunity to
“examine.” Accordingly, besides acknowledgment of every one
of the forgeries which Mr. Douglas had detected, there was a voluntary
indication of a number of others. Eight of the quarto pages were
occupied with reprints of about twenty-four of the vitiated passages
from Masenius, Grotius, Ramsay, Staphorstius, Foxe, Quintianus, Beza,
Fletcher, Taubmann, and Heywood, the vitiating interpolations being
made obvious to the eye by being printed in italics. Appended to
this enumeration, and to renewed expressions of contrition, there
was an explanation of the original cause of the author's hostility to
Milton. One of the chief hopes of his life had been blasted by
that fixed conviction in the British mind of Milton's incomparable
excellence! For, about ten years before, when he had published
at Edinburgh his *Poetarum Scotorum Musæ Sacre*, including a new
edition of the celebrated Arthur Johnston's Latin Translation of the
Psalms, and when, in consequence of the recommendation by the
General Assembly of the Scottish Church that this translation should
be used in schools, he was in the sure expectation of a yearly demand
for school editions of this portion of his book, what had happened?
At that very time (1742) there had appeared the Fourth Book of
Pope's *Dunciad*, containing this sarcastic reference to the well-known
Mr. Auditor Benson of London for his extraordinary double enthu-

siasm for two such diverse poets as the English Milton and the Scottish Arthur Johnston :—

“ On two unequal crutches propt he came,
Milton’s on this, on that one Johnston’s name.”

Not only was this an insult to Scotland ; but it had nipped in the bud all Lauder’s hopes of a demand for Johnston’s Psalms in school editions. “From this time,” he says, “all my praises of Johnston became ridiculous, and I was censured with great freedom for forcing upon the schools an author whom Mr. Pope had mentioned only as a foil to a better poet.” Hence his notion of a revenge on Milton by stigmatising him as a plagiarist.

As the style of the quoted passages will show, this letter of confession and recantation was not absolutely Lauder’s own, but was Samuel Johnson’s. Implicated as Johnson was by having contributed the Preface and the Postscript to Lauder’s now exploded Essay, it was necessary that he should clear himself ; and, though, as Boswell tells us, “he expressed the strongest indignation against Lauder,” the policy which recommended itself at once to his honesty and to his pity for the poor detected wretch was that of making the best of a bad business. Accordingly, as Boswell also informs us, he had “dictated” the letter to Lauder, compelling him to the only course that was honestly possible in the circumstances. That he may have had some difficulty, and that Lauder put his name somewhat reluctantly to the confession dictated to him, is suggested by the fact that, appended to the confession, as it appeared in print, there were nine pages of old or recent testimonials to Lauder’s learning and ability, calculated to convey the impression that he might yet recover himself and be useful, and also a very ingenious closing *Postscript*. In this *Postscript* Lauder gives a different account of the cause and purpose of his deception from that which Johnson, no doubt on Lauder’s own information, had put into the letter. “And, now my character is plac’d above all suspicion of fraud by authentick documents,” says this *Postscript*, “I’ll make bold at last to pull off the mask, and declare sincerely the true motive that induc’d me to interpolate a few lines into some of the authors quoted by me in my Essay on Milton ; which was this : Knowing the prepossession in favour of Milton, how deeply it was rooted in many, I was willing to make a trial if the partial admirers of that author would admit a translation of his

“own words to pass for his sense or exhibit his meaning; which I thought they would not. Nor was I mistaken in my conjecture; forasmuch as several gentlemen, seemingly persons of judgment and learning, assur’d me they humbly conceiv’d I had not prov’d my point, and that Milton might have written as he has done, supposing he had never seen these authors, or they had never existed. Such is the force of prejudice!” In other words, Lauder’s Essay had been a mere trap for Milton’s extreme admirers, an experiment how far they would go in their defence of his originality! Would any man in his senses, if he had intended a mere general imposture, have gone to Hog’s Paraphrase of Milton,—“a book common at every sale, I had almost said at every stall,”—for the Latin interpolations that were to be offered as proofs of Milton’s habit of borrowing? No; but such interpolations from Hogreus had served excellently for the minor and more innocent purpose! Actually, Milton’s obstinate admirers, when they were presented with his own ideas turned into Latin by one of his translators, had refused to recognise in them anything necessarily or essentially Miltonic! Was it not a public service, if even by a little stratagem, to have brought out that fact?

Lauder, when Johnson’s clutch was removed from his shoulders, continued in the mood of relapse indicated by this *Postscript*. What he did through the year or two after 1750 one hardly knows; but in 1752-4 he contrived to pass through the press his projected edition of some of the Latin books from which he had accused Milton of borrowing. “*Delectus Autorum Sacrorum Millono Facem Prælucentium: Adcurante Gulielmo Laudero, A.M.*” is the general title of two very handsome octavo volumes, in which one finds collected Lauder’s exertions at intervals through those years, with separate title-pages purporting that there were various printers and various publishers. Vol. I. contains a reprint of Ramsay’s *Pœmata Sacra*, certified as exact, and also a reprint of the *Adamus Exul* of Grotius, similarly certified; and Vol. II. contains the *Sarcotis* of Masenius, the *Paradisus* of Caspar Barlaeus, as Latinised by that scholar from the Dutch of Jacob Cats, and also the incomplete *Bellum Angelicum* of Frederic Taubmann, together with a poem of which no mention had been made in Lauder’s Essay, but which he now thought worth reproducing, viz. the First Book of the *Demonomachia* of Oderic Valmarana, in Latin hexameters, originally

published at Vienna in 1627. In this reproduction of the texts of so many rare Latin books there was nothing objectionable; it was in the editorial prefaces, and the editorial matter of various kinds stuffed into the interstices between the several reprints, that the *animus* appeared, and the significance of the general title was fully defined. As all this editorial matter is in Latin, it seems to have remained unknown how desperate Lauder had become in his hatred of Milton, and to what an extent he had relapsed from the confession into which Johnson had compelled or persuaded him. He even disowns that confession. "I should like those good men to know," he says, "that that Letter to Douglas, though it went forth in my name and with my name prefixed, was neither written by me nor subscribed by me, nor expressed my own real sentiments, but all the opposite, if you except only the few poems that were interpolated, notwithstanding that, in my imprudence, and hardly having read it through, I permitted it to be published as mine, led into a piece of bad deceit (such is sometimes the force of a bad counsellor), and under the influence of some human weakness at the time, as there is no man who is wise always." The acrimony with which, again and again, he assaults the memory of Milton is nothing less than frenzy. Thus, not content with again maintaining Milton's obligations to the poets re-edited in the volumes, or to those others mentioned in his Essay, he inserts at one place in ten consecutive pages an alphabetical syllabus or list of ninety-eight books or authors, with this heading: "Syllabus of the authors who were either furtively used by Milton, the Prince of Plagiaries, or at the least gave him light from their previous torches in his composition of that prodigiously famous poem of his, *Paradise Lost*, by which he undeservedly won for himself his vast celebrity." Into this long list are pressed books and authors from all times and quarters, including Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, the novel called *The Spanish Rogue*, Langland's *Piers Ploughman*, Lucretius, Virgil, Martial, Ovid, Phædrus, Pliny, Homer and the other Greek poets, Sannazarius, Tasso, Sedulius, Shakespeare, Sidney, Spenser, and King James I.

In the same year, 1754, which witnessed the appearance of the last instalment of Lauder's *Delectus Autorum Miltoño Facem Preluculentium*, there was another frantic effort of Lauder's to vilify the dead man whom his soul loathed. This was a book entitled, "*King Charles vindicated from the Charge of Plagiarism brought against him*

by Milton, and Milton himself convicted of Forgery and a Gross Imposition on the Publick." The attack was on that famous portion of Milton's *Eikonoklastes* which demonstrated the spuriousness of one of the prayers attributed to Charles I. in the *Eikon Basilike*. This was Lauder's last. All that seems to be known of him further is that he went to Barbadoes on some teaching engagement or project, and died there miserably in 1771.

One might have thought that the spectacle of the figure of this poor self-gibbeted monomaniac, thus left dangling in the air of the Literary History of England in the middle of the eighteenth century, would have deterred subsequent critics from any continuance or resumption of his speculation. It has hardly turned out so, however. The *virus* of Lauder's speculation has transmitted itself, and has affected critics the least conscious of having anything in common with Lauder, and the readiest to join the rest of the world in the orthodox execration of Lauder and his imposture. There is something so intrinsically fascinating, indeed, for a certain order of minds, in the question of Milton's indebtedness, that it has been pursued, or partially renewed, since Lauder's time by writer after writer in whom it would be very unfair to discern the influence of any other motives than those of the most legitimate scholarly curiosity, in combination with the most sincere admiration of Milton. A really interesting and useful book, for example, was Mr. Charles Dunster's *Considerations on Milton's Early Reading and the Prima Stamina of his Paradise Lost*, published in 1800, and discussing more largely than Lauder had done, but in a very different spirit, the probable effects on Milton, as on so many of his contemporaries, of early acquaintance with *Sylvester's Du Bartas*. Again, when Mr. Sharon Turner, in his *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, edition of 1807, called attention to certain striking resemblances between some passages of *Paradise Lost* and some portions of the *Paraphrase of Genesis* left among the remains of the old Anglo-Saxon poet *Cædmon*, he was clearly within the bounds of his duty, and made an important historical suggestion. The same can hardly be said for any of those other bibliographical rangings and conjectures, subsequent to Lauder's, of which Todd, in editing Milton, thought himself bound to take account. Todd, of course, acted in the purest spirit of loyalty to Milton; but his laborious conspectus of those modern books or writers that he had found cited by one person or another, at one

time or another, as having possibly been laid under contribution by Milton for something or other,—a conspectus which, under the absurd title of *Inquiry into the Origin of Paradise Lost*, occupies no fewer than forty pages in the latest of Todd's editions of the Poetical Works,—was a very maundering performance in itself, and has helped to perpetuate a great deal of matter that would otherwise have been usefully forgotten. In this conspectus not only does Andreini again figure, and not only do there reappear the ghosts of Lauder's eighteen or nineteen alleged creditors of Milton,—Masenius, Taubmann, Valmarana, Caspar Barlæus, and the rest,—as if, though Lauder had overstated their claims, the ghosts themselves were not satisfied with a total dismissal of those claims; but about thirteen more creditors, whose possible claims had been unearthed by later detectives than Lauder, were added to the list. In Italian, besides the *Adamo* of Andreini, there were mentioned by Todd, on the faith of report or surmise from various quarters, these authors and books:—Antonio Corno-zano, *Discorso in Versi della Creazione del Mondo sino alla Venuta di Gesù Cristo*, 1472; Antonio Alfani, *La Battaglia Celeste tra Michele e Lucifero*, 1568; Erasmo di Valvasone, *Angeleida*, 1590; Giovanni Soranzo, *Dell' Adamo*, 1604; Amico Anguifilo, *Il Caso di Lucifero*; Tasso, *Le Sette Giornate del Mondo Creato*, 1607; Gasparo Murtola, *Della Creazione del Mondo, Poema Sacro*, 1608; Felice Passero, *Epamerone, ovvero L'Opera de sei Giorni*, 1609; Marini, *Strage de gli Innocenti*, 1633, and also his *Gerusalemme Distrutta*; Troilo Lancetta, *La Scena Tragica d' Adamo ed Eva*, 1644; Serafino della Salandra, *Adamo Caduto, Trag. Sacra*, 1647. A Spanish poet was found for the list in Alonzo de Azevedo, author of a *Creacion del Mundo*, published in 1615; and there was reference to a similar poem of the Portuguese Camoens, published in the same year.

What is to be said of all this, from Voltaire's original hint about Andreini, on through whatever of Lauder's gropings among old books may have been kept in memory as of some possible validity despite his own scoundrelism, and so to the latest additions registered in Todd's conspectus? For the most part, it is laborious nonsense. That Milton knew some of the books mentioned, and indeed others of the same sort, is very likely; that *Sylvester's Du Bartas* had been familiar to him from his childhood is quite certain; that recollections from *Sylvester's Du Bartas*, from Grotius's *Adamus Exul*, and perhaps from one or two of the others, may be traced in his *Paradise Lost*, may

admit of proof; but that in any of the thirty or forty books whose titles have been paraded, or in all of them together, there is to be found "The Origin of Paradise Lost," in any intelligible sense of such a phrase, is a notion verging on imbecility. It is quite evident, indeed, that some of the books which Milton is conjectured to have used have been cited without any knowledge of their contents, but merely from confidence in their titles as seen in book-catalogues.¹

In what sense is it meant that "the origin of Milton's *Paradise Lost*" is to be sought for among any or all of those previous books? (1) Is it meant that they suggested the *subject* of the poem? This, which seems to have been Voltaire's meaning in his reference to Andreini in particular, is surely a most unnecessary effort in the art of guessing. What need for Milton, or for any other Englishman in his time, to go to Andreini's *Adamo*, or to any other book, for the notion of a poem on such a subject as the Fall of Man? Was not that subject one already necessarily in Milton's daily thoughts; was not the mind of England, and of the whole Christian world, full of it? Strange that the very conclusion most pertinent to the finding of so many previous poems, Latin, Italian, and English, treating of the Rebellion of the Angels, the Six Days of Creation, Adam and Eve in Paradise, their Temptation by Satan, their Sin and its punishment, etc., should have been missed by the transcribers of the titles of those poems! If only on the bibliographical evidence so collected, was not the subject of *Paradise Lost* one of those which already possessed in a marked degree that quality of hereditary and widely-diffused interest which fits subjects for the purposes of great poets? Milton, it ought to have been seen, inherited the subject as one with which the imagination of Christendom had long been engaged, and which had been nibbled at, or actually attempted, again and again by poets in and out of England, though by none managed to its complete capabilities. Although he decided upon it at last after deliberation and comparison of the claims of other subjects, there had been leadings to it, and most ample preparations for it, in his own lifelong

¹ Todd himself gives a curious example of this. Among the Italian books cited (by Baretti in his *Italian Library*) as likely to have been of some use to Milton was "an epic poem," *Le Sei Giornate*, by a Sebastiano Brizzo. The guess, of course, was that the title, *Le Sei Giornate*, meant the Six Days of Creation. The book, however, when examined, turned out to be, Todd tells us, neither a poem at all nor anything relating to the Six Days of Creation, but a collection of short novels, supposed to be told by six young men.

ruminations. One can discern presentiments of it in some of his juvenile poems. In his *Ode on the Nativity*, and his Latin *In Quintum Novembris*, for example, there are traces of his early familiarity with some of those conceptions of the personality and agency of Satan, and of the physical connexion between Hell and Man's World, which reappear in his great epic. (2) It may be meant, however, that Milton borrowed so much of the *general plan and scheme* of his epic from previous authors that in this sense the "origin" of his epic lies to a considerable extent out of himself. Here again there is evidence of extremely defective knowledge of old literary history, and of the modes of thinking common throughout Christendom in Milton's time and through several preceding centuries. Not one of those old poets who wrote about the Angelic Rebellion, the Creation, the Fall of Man, etc., and from whom Milton is supposed to have borrowed, invented the essentials of his plan or story. There was a common tradition of conceptions on these subjects, and even of imagined situations in the story of Satan's first advent upon the earth, and action there upon the beginnings of human history, all derived from the Bible, or from fabrications of mediæval theology in interpretation of the Bible; and, in thinking of those subjects, it was no more possible for any man to think otherwise than in accordance with the essentials of this tradition than to leap off from his own shadow. This consideration disposes at once of scores of Milton's supposed borrowings of this or that in the scheme or story of his poem. Even that cosmological system which he assumed in the poem, with the mundane world of the Ptolemaic spheres in the midst, and the extramundane realms of the Empyrean, Chaos, and Hell related to it transcendently, was a common possession of the European mind for centuries before Milton was born, affecting all the private musings of educated thinkers, and pervading the speculative and poetical literature of all nations. Milton's very originality consists in his having allowed himself such liberties with this traditional cosmology as to have aggrandised it and made it his own, and in his having transmitted to his countrymen this Miltonised and aggrandised version of it, in contrast with that more concentrated and intense version of it which the genius of Dante had bequeathed to the Italians. (3) But, apart either from the *subject* of Milton's epic or from its *general plan*, may there not be some justification of the assertion of an extraneous "origin" for the epic in the amount of the alleged borrow-

ings of individual ideas, images, and expressions? How far may it be said, in Johnson's excellent phrase, that Milton "demolished other buildings to embellish his own"? This is a question of fact, to be answered only by an examination of all the alleged cases of beauties of idea or language borrowed by Milton, and a computation of the amount of the borrowed matter so proved and ascertained. That inquiry, therefore, so far as it need occupy us, must distribute itself among the notes. Surely, however, the general issue may be anticipated here, if only by considering the strange conception of Milton and his mode of working which the inquiry implies on the part of those who move it. We are to imagine, it seems, that Milton, from the time when he first projected his *Paradise Lost*, collected all books that he could hear of as having anyhow treated the same or any related theme, and pencil-margined these books or made notes from them, and that, after he had lost his eyesight, and had set himself in earnest to the composition of the poem in his blind condition, he still collected likely books, had them read aloud to him, and noted the passages of greatest worth for his purpose, so that, when the actual mood of invention and dictation came upon him, his habit was, as it were, to sit amid a miscellany of collected shreds, old and new, from other people's writings, catch one shred after another as he wanted it, and melt it with what cunning he could into the flow of his own verse! Was ever a real poem written in this fashion by anybody; or could it have been in this fashion that Milton, of all men, composed? Very different, at all events, is his own account of the matter, in that passage where, speaking of the greatness of his argument, he explains what he considered to be the sole requisite to his constant success. It was:—

" If answerable style I can obtain
Of my Celestial Patroness, who deigns
Her nightly visitation unimplored,
And dictates to me slumbering, or inspires
Easy my unpremeditated verse,
Since first this subject for heroic song
Pleased me, long choosing and beginning late."

Unless we are to accept Lauder's imputation of positive dishonesty to Milton, the meanest mendacity in concealing his plagiarisms (and here the mendacity would amount to the most blasphemous profanity), surely it is Milton's own account of the matter that we may

prefer. In short, while we concede that recollections of his readings in modern books may have been fused into the text of his *Paradise Lost* as well as recollections from the Bible and the classics, the concession need not trouble us any more in the one case than it does in the other, or need trouble us a great deal less.

Not to seem even yet, however, to dismiss too hastily the much vexed question of Milton's "Use and Imitation of the Moderns," let us look a little more closely at the two supposed instances of his indebtedness which have been most recently insisted on, and are in themselves the most curious and interesting. These are his supposed use of the preserved fragment of the Paraphrase of Genesis by the old Anglo-Saxon poet Cædmon, and his supposed borrowing of ideas and passages from the poems of his eminent Dutch contemporary, Joost van den Vondel.

Mr. Sharon Turner's suggestion, made in 1807, that Milton must have been acquainted with the old Anglo-Saxon poem known as the Cædmonian Paraphrase of Genesis, and must have taken hints from it, has been developed by subsequent scholars, and has passed almost into an accepted belief. The Paraphrase consists in all of about 2900 lines of the customary Alliterated Rhythm of the Anglo-Saxons; about 1000 of which are occupied with a version of the story of the first three chapters of the Biblical record. It is to this portion of the poem, treating of the expulsion of Satan and the other Rebel Angels from Heaven, the Creation of the new world of Man, the Paraisaic life of Adam and Eve, the planning in Hell of Satan's scheme of revenge, and his execution of that scheme by his ascent into man's world and successful temptation there of the human pair, that Milton is supposed to have been most particularly indebted; and the most striking coincidences of all with Milton's text are found in one passage, of about 100 lines, where the older and ruder poet represents Satan as soliloquising dolefully in Hell, haranguing his comrades there, and broaching to them his purposed method of revenge by the ruin of Adam. There will be sufficient quotation at the proper points among our notes to give an idea of the nature and extent of these coincidences; and they may be left to make their own impression when so exhibited. It is with the previous question of the historical probability or possibility of Milton's acquaintance with the Cædmonian poem that we are concerned here. Now, though it would be pleasing, rather than otherwise, to have to conclude that Milton *was*

acquainted with this relic of his old Northumbrian predecessor, the very father and beginner of Sacred English Poetry, the difficulties in the way of such a conclusion are far greater than those who have adopted it have recognised. For students of English Literature now Cædmon is a familiar figure: there are editions of him, translations of him, books about him and his poetry. But all this has happened by a process of resuscitation, mostly quite recent; and, when we go back to the year 1640, or thereabouts, when Milton first sketched his *Paradise Lost*, what do we find? Why, that not a scrap of Cædmon's poetry was then accessible to any mortal, or was even known to exist! People could then read, indeed, in the Latin pages of Beda, the fine legend of the illiterate Northumbrian cowherd of the seventh century, called Cædmon, to whom the gift of song had been miraculously imparted in a dream, and who was received in consequence into the Abbess Hilda's monastery of Streoneshalh, and spent the rest of his life there as a monk, having the Biblical History read out to him, piece by piece, by his fellow-monks, and versifying it all imaginatively in his own vernacular. But, though people could thus be aware what a large quantity of reputedly excellent Cædmonian poetry had been in circulation in England before the Norman Conquest, it had all perished,—utterly swept away nearly six centuries ago, with Anglo-Saxondom itself. For those six centuries there had been no relic or memory of Cædmon, save in Beda's legend. Only from that legend, it can be positively proved, did Milton, when he first sketched his *Paradise Lost*, know anything of the old Northumbrian poet. The proof exists in the form of a jotting in Milton's own hand, in or about the year 1641, in his recently recovered "Common Place Book," published by the Camden Society. "*De poetâ Anglo subito divinitus facto mira et perplacida historiola narratur apud Bedam, Hist. l. iv. c. 24*" ("In Beda, Hist. Book IV. Chap. 24, there is a wonderful and very pleasant little story of an English poet suddenly made such by divine inspiration"): so Milton had jotted down in the Common Place Book, immediately after one of those readings of his in Beda in which he was engaged for the purpose of collecting fit subjects for dramas of British History. Clearly the poet of whom this was all he then knew can have had no influence on the sketches of *Paradise Lost* he had then drawn out. But, in the course of the four-and-twenty years that elapsed between 1641 and the completion of *Paradise Lost* in 1665, may he not have come to know more of Cædmon? Here

there does come in a gleam of possibility. Though no one knew it, there did survive in 1641 one solitary Anglo-Saxon manuscript containing remnants of the old Cædmonian poems, to the extent of about 5000 lines in all, the Paraphrase of Genesis included. This unique MS., now in the Bodleian at Oxford, had either somehow come already into the possession of Archbishop Usher before the political troubles in Ireland drove him to England, or was acquired by him somehow after he came to reside in England, first at Oxford from 1640 to 1645, and afterwards chiefly in London. At all events, it lay, with other Anglo-Saxon MSS., in the valuable library which the learned primate had around him in his London abode. Among those who had access to this library was a certain foreign scholar, of Franco-German birth, named François Dujon, or, in the Latinised form of the name, Franciscus Junius. He had been in London since 1620 as librarian and what not in the household of the Earl of Arundel, so famous for his art collections; but his speciality was Teutonic philology. All relics of any of the Teutonic tongues were precious to Junius; and he had latterly extended his studies to Anglo-Saxon. Turning over the Anglo-Saxon MSS. in Archbishop Usher's library, and coming upon that above described, he seems to have been the first to recognise what it was, or might possibly be. He must at least have expressed some interest in it to Usher; for Usher made him a present of it. At what time this happened I cannot ascertain exactly; but it was probably about or shortly before 1650,—in which year Junius, after having been thirty years in England, went abroad again, for a long period of residence and travel in various parts of the Continent. The likelihood is that he took the MS. with him; but there is no proof that even then he had announced his discovery, or was himself quite sure on the subject. Not till 1655 was the announcement made in any distinct fashion, even for the learned world. In that year, however, after a preliminary mention of the MS. in a book of Junius published in Amsterdam, there was an actual edition of the MS., published by him at the same place, in the form of a very thin quarto volume, and with the title "*Cædmonis Monachi Paraphrasis Poetica Genesios ac præcipuarum Sacræ Pagine Historiarum abhinc annos MLXX Anglo-Saxonice manuscripta, et nunc primum edita a Francisco Junio*" ("The monk Cædmon's Poetical Paraphrase of Genesis, and the Principal Histories of the Sacred Text, written 1070 years ago in Anglo-Saxon, and now first

edited by Francis Junius"). The number of copies printed must have been small; but it may be assumed that some copies found their way into England in 1655 or 1656. As far as I can ascertain, these, for any effect of diffusing a knowledge of Cædmon, must have fallen dead. And no wonder! The very look of the thin quarto volume, I can certify from inspection of a copy of it, must have forbidden acquaintance with its contents to all except very rare Teutonic linguists, like Junius himself. The Cædmonian fragments were printed in the most archaic system of Saxon engraving or typography; they ran on continuously as so much prose, without division into lines or other metrical distinction; and there was no accompanying translation, or abstract, or description, or comment, in Latin or in any other language. Hence, in fact, none of 'all Junius's learned publications seems to have attracted so little contemporary attention, the husk in which it enveloped Cædmon being so impervious that the old Northumbrian poet went to sleep again in it, as he had done so long before in Beda's legend, and the whole business of extricating him, and revealing to the English public something of his real lineaments, lay over for that more luminous editing of the Bodleian MS. which did not come till a century and a half later. May not Milton have been an exception, however, to the general apathy with which Junius's little Amsterdam volume of 1655 was received? How will that hypothesis work? If a copy of the volume did come into Milton's house in Petty France in 1655, or subsequently between 1658 and 1660, when the composition of *Paradise Lost* had been begun, how can he have availed himself of it? We do not know that he could himself have read Anglo-Saxon at any time, or, at all events, such a trying piece of Anglo-Saxon as that; but, as in 1655 he had been totally blind for three years, the trouble of deciphering the Anglo-Saxon for him must have devolved on others. What expert in Anglo-Saxon was there about him that could have done the feat of deciphering such a cramp original, and translating it or the substance of it into Latin or English for Milton's behoof? Had Junius himself been at hand, an eager four or five hours continuously, or an eager day or two at intervals, between him and Milton, might have sufficed for the feat; but hardly anything less. But, though there is something like evidence that Junius had been one of Milton's valued acquaintances while they were together in London, he had been out of England, as we have seen, for some five years at the date of the

publication of the Cædmonian fragments in Amsterdam; and, if the records are to be trusted, he was not to be back in England till 1674 or 1675. Well, but, it may be asked, might not Milton have been one of a select number of persons to whom Junius, before going abroad, say in 1650, had communicated his discovery of the Cædmonian fragments in Usher's library, and even showed the MS.? Might not Milton's curiosity about the old Northumbrian poet, respecting whom he had made his jotting from Beda ten years before, have been then roused; and may he not then, in the interest of his projected *Paradise Lost*, or afterwards, in the interest of the poem when it was in progress, have contrived, by hook or by crook, to pierce the cocoa-nut husk of Junius's Amsterdam volume, and become acquainted with the substance of Cædmon's Paraphrase of Genesis, and even with much of the wording? Among the numberless possibilities under the sun it would be too bold to say that this may not be one; and, so long as a question cannot be settled absolutely in the negative, it is one's bounden duty to leave it in full doubt. In favour of the conclusion that Milton never had such knowledge of Cædmon as has been attributed to him, one may adduce, however, two reasons in addition to those already given. In the first place, the argument that he *must* have known Cædmon's Genesis and taken hints from it proceeds too much on that assumption of his having systematically "demolished other buildings to embellish his own" which we have found incredible respecting the method by which he or any other real poet ever worked. Are we to imagine that Milton, having heard of the discovery of an old ivy-clad Northumbrian fabric, lying beyond his own range of access through English, Latin, or Italian, gave himself no rest till he had employed competent hands to demolish for him this interesting antiquity too, and fetch him some of the materials? No need, surely, for such a fancy as this! For, in the second place, the coincidences between portions of the Cædmonian Paraphrase and certain passages of *Paradise Lost* are to be accounted for quite easily without resorting to the notion that Milton borrowed from Cædmon. Not only are they such as might easily happen from the vivid momentary conception of the same incidents and situations by two minds far distant from each other in time; but the incidents and situations themselves belong to that traditional version of the Biblical story of the Angelic Rebellion and the Fall of Man which, as has been explained, had

been in possession of the imagination of all Christendom for many ages, and from the essentials of which no poet could lawfully swerve. Although the Cosmos of Cædmon was a very homely old Northumbrian affair indeed, with Heaven, Hell, and Man's World much closer together in it than in the later mediæval cosmology, and immeasurably closer than in that aggrandised cosmology of Milton which bursts all sense of astronomical space, the same things essentially had to go on in that homelier cosmos of the Northumbrian singer as in the enlarged universes of his successors, and in much the same order. There must be a Hell somewhere, in which Satan and the other Rebel Angels have been shut up; there must be lamentations there and plots of revenge; the plotted revenge must be in the form of an expedition upwards into Man's newly-created World for the ruin of that experiment of the Almighty and of the race of His new favourites; Adam and Eve must be walking in innocence in their beautiful Paradise when the fell visitor arrives; and the visit must transact itself in a specified series of incidents, and have but one specified ending. On the theme or story so prescribed in all its essentials to every Christian imagination the genius of the old Northumbrian poet exerted itself in a strong and rough fashion, and with some really powerful effect; it descended to scores of subsequent poets and theologians in all countries, each treating it, or some portion of it, in his own tongue, or in Latin, and with his own little differences; and it came, at last, to Milton in *his* turn.

Much of what has just been said will apply to that other case of Milton's supposed indebtedness which recent circumstances seem to have entitled to some special notice.

Neither in Lauder's impudent conspectus in 1750-54, nor in Todd's more diffident and later conspectus, of Milton's possible creditors, was there any mention whatever of the Dutch poet Joost van den Vondel, probably because Dutch Literature had faded all but utterly, since the seventeenth century, out of the cognisance of British scholarship. Amends, however, have been made amply of late years; and now it is Vondel, the Dutch Vondel, that has superseded all others in the reputed honour of having been pillaged most largely and cunningly by the all-pillaging Milton. His claims to this honour were first stirred, as was natural, among his own countrymen. The Dutch are proud of their Vondel, and with justice. Born in 1589, or nineteen years before Milton, he did not

die till 1679, or five years after Milton; and in the course of this long life of ninety years,—interesting for various private struggles and vicissitudes, including a change of his creed in 1641 from his native Dutch Protestantism back to Roman Catholicism,—he published a long series of works, each of more or less mark and notoriety at the time of its appearance, and collectively of such importance that the Dutch look back on him now as the chief figure in the most flourishing age of their vernacular literature. For evidence of the regard in which he is still held by the Dutch nation, one has only to look at the twelve superb illustrated volumes of “*De Werken van Vondel in verband gebracht met zijn Leven*” (“The Works of Vondel brought into connexion with his Life”), published at Amsterdam between 1860 and 1870, under the editorship of the late eminent Mr. J. Van Lennep, and with copious annotations and elucidations. Long before that date there had been patriotic mutterings among the Dutch as to Milton’s obligations to their Vondel, and especially to Vondel’s *Lucifer*, a tragedy in five Acts, brought out on the Amsterdam stage in 1654, when the author was in the sixty-fifth year of his age. After two representations, the performance was stopped by the authorities, nominally for religious reasons, though really for political reasons also; but the play, having been published simultaneously with its production on the stage, became all the more popular in its printed form. The theory is that Milton must have known and studied this play of Vondel, consisting of over 2000 lines of rhyming Dutch Alexandrines, with interspersed choruses, and used it in his *Paradise Lost*. Vague rumours of this theory had found their way occasionally into British critical periodicals; but the first distinct view of it in English seems to have been that given by Mr. Edmund W. Gosse in his *Studies in the Literature of Northern Europe*, published in 1879. In that volume, besides an interesting general account of Vondel’s life and writings, there was an express chapter entitled “Vondel and Milton,” containing a full abstract of Vondel’s *Lucifer*,—“the most brilliant poetical work in the Dutch language” Mr. Gosse calls it,—with translations of passages from it in the metres of the original, and a brief estimate of the evidence that it must have been used by Milton. On this last point Mr. Gosse expresses himself moderately, concluding that there can be “no doubt whatever” that some passages of Vondel had made a “deep impression on Milton’s imagination,”

but dismissing with some contempt the "foolishness" in this case, as in others, of the ordinary outcry of plagiarism. Mr. Gosse's moderation on the subject seems to have given offence to at least one of his readers; for in 1885 there appeared a little volume entitled *Milton and Vondel: A Curiosity of Literature*, in which the author, Mr. George Edmundson, "Late Fellow and Tutor of Brasenose College, Oxford, Vicar of Northolt, Middlesex," accused Mr. Gosse of having treated the argument in an "incomplete and misleading" manner, and took great pains to supply his deficiencies. Not only from Vondel's *Lucifer*, published in 1654, did Milton borrow in his great poem, Mr. Edmundson found himself obliged to assert, but also from other works of Vondel: notably his *Joannes Boetgeant* ("John the Messenger of Repentance"), an epic in rhyming Dutch Alexandrines, "written in 1662"; his *Bespiegelingen van God en Godsdienst* ("Reflections on God and Religion"), a long didactic poem, in the same kind of verse, published in 1661; and his *Adam in Ballingschap* ("Adam in Banishment"), a tragedy, also in the same kind of verse, "published early in 1664." In support of this assertion Mr. Edmundson produces 67 passages, longer or shorter, from the four cited books of Vondel (40 from his *Lucifer*, 13 from his *Joannes Boetgeant*, 5 from his *Bespiegelingen*, and 9 from his *Adam*), translating these passages into English blank verse in the text of his volume, while the original Dutch of them is given in an Appendix, and soliciting attention to parallel passages quoted from Milton. He actually honeycombs *Paradise Lost* with borrowings from the Dutchman. Accordingly, while it is still to Mr. Gosse's book that English readers must go for the best general account of Vondel, and while the few translated specimens he gives from Vondel's *Lucifer* in the metres of the original are far more artistically done than the more numerous specimens translated by Mr. Edmundson into blank verse, and so necessarily Miltonised somewhat to begin with, yet it is now to Mr. Edmundson's volume that all readers must go who would see the question of Milton's indebtedness to Vondel argued most minutely and unflinchingly. In the resoluteness of his advocacy of the claims of Vondel he seems hardly to care a rush for the claims of all the competitors previously in the field. While thinking that there were some grains of fact even in Lauder's enumeration of authors used by Milton, he is willing to dismiss all the authors on Lauder's list, or in Todd's later and more extensive

conspectus, as but *canaille* among Milton's creditors, in comparison with this newly-found creditor in chief. As he makes the present editor remotely responsible in some degree for having brought him to this conclusion, it is but courtesy here to bestow some attention on the result. But, indeed, Mr. Edmundson's little volume deserves attention on its own account. It is a thorough piece of work for its purpose, undertaken and executed with perfect sincerity, and in a scholarly spirit, with nothing of Lauder's rancour against Milton, but, on the contrary, with professions of participation in the common reverence for Milton which one finds it difficult to reconcile with those beliefs respecting Milton's use of Vondel which the book tries to propagate.

That Milton had heard a good deal about his Dutch contemporary may be taken for granted. The connexion between the Dutch Provinces and the British Islands was never more intimate than in the time of the English Commonwealth and the Oliverian Protectorate. There had even been negotiations for such a union of the two Republics as should make them substantially one European power; and, though these negotiations broke down and a brief time of war followed, the coming and going between the two countries was incessant. Thus, among the distinguished foreign visitors to London with whom Milton was brought into contact by the duties of his Foreign Secretaryship, not a few were Dutchmen. Eminent Dutchmen were among his correspondents; and there are proofs that gossip about literary matters reached him from Leyden, Amsterdam, and other Dutch towns. He cannot have remained ignorant, therefore, of the existence of such a Dutch drama as Vondel's *Lucifer*, or of the stir it caused in Holland on its first production and publication in 1654. Whether he knew more of it than its existence, its name, and something of its general character by report, is not so certain. It was in Dutch, and did Milton understand Dutch? It would have been a fair conjecture that, having so much to do with Dutchmen and Dutch documents in the course of his official duties, he did not remain quite ignorant of a language then of greater European interest even on literary grounds than it has ever been since; but we are not left to mere conjecture on the subject. In a letter of Milton's friend, the celebrated New-Englander and Arch-Tolerationist Roger Williams, containing reminiscences of his visit to London in 1651-4 (see *ante*, vol. i. pp. 227-9), these words occur: "It pleased the Lord to call

me, for some time and with some persons, to practise the Hebrew, the Greek, Latin, French, and Dutch. The Secretary of the Council, Mr. Milton, for my Dutch I read him, read me many more languages." This exchange of Williams's Dutch *readings* to Milton for Milton's *readings* in other tongues to Williams must have been late in 1651, or early in 1652; after the middle of which last year Milton was blind, and could not *read* to anybody. It is credible, of course, that Williams's Dutch readings to Milton were not merely *vivâ voce* translations from Dutch into English for Milton's benefit, but included actual lessons in Dutch, and so that Milton before he became blind may have understood spoken Dutch and been able to read a bit of Dutch for himself. When Mr. Gosse ventured on the fancy, however, that "immediately on the publication of Vondel's *Lucifer* a copy found its way to Milton," and that "it may have been one of the last books he read with his own faded eyes," there was a neglect of dates. Vondel's *Lucifer* did not appear till 1654, when Milton had been already for two years totally blind. Any acquaintance he made with Vondel's drama, whether on its first appearance or afterwards, must therefore have been by the assistance of others. We may imagine, if we choose, that Williams's readings to Milton were continued to as late as March 1654, when Williams left England on his return to America, and so that the very last of them was Vondel's *Lucifer*, if a copy of the book was then procurable in London. Or, if acquaintance with the book was postponed till 1658, when the composition of *Paradise Lost* was fairly begun, there can have been no lack in London then, or at any time between that year and 1665, when *Paradise Lost* was finished, of persons who could read Dutch to Milton on pressing occasion. Dutch, indeed, is not specially mentioned as one of the languages which his daughters had been drilled to read to him from print; but, if *they* failed in this particular, there could be other help. It is therefore quite possible that, before Milton was engaged on *Paradise Lost*, or while he was engaged on it, he may have formed a sufficient acquaintance with Vondel's *Lucifer*, whether by merely having the Dutch read out to him and translating it mentally for himself, or by having it translated to him by the reader so far as that was necessary. He may thus have come to know that the personages of Vondel's drama, in addition to Lucifer himself, designated "Stedehouder" or "Stadtholder," were Beelzebub, Belial, Apollion, and other "Luciferists," on the one

hand, and Gabriel, Michael, Raphael, and other faithful Angels, on the other ; and he may have carried away a complete enough notion of the story and action of the drama, and have been impressed, more or less favourably, by individual passages in the dialogue. But this is not by any means all that Mr. Edmundson requires us to believe. He requires us to believe that Milton kept that Dutch book beside him day after day, and year after year, making his daughters, or whoever else were his assistants, read from it to him again and again and again, often directing them to passages he remembered but wanted to hear repeated exactly, and all the while conveying the ideas, images, and expressions he liked best into the secrecies of his own blind musings, to be reproduced, as much "bettered in the borrowing" as he found possible, in his next day's, or some future day's, dictation. Nay more, he requires us to believe that Milton found Vondel's book so useful, such a mine of suggestions, that he was on the watch for any other books from the same quarter. He requires us to believe that in 1661 and 1662, when a large part of *Paradise Lost* had been done, Milton procured Vondel's *Bespiegelingen van God en Godsdienst* and his *Joannes Boetgezant*, and that similarly in 1664, when *Paradise Lost* was approaching completeness, he procured Vondel's *Adam in Ballingschap*, and that he used these books too, in the manner described, for what remained of his epic, even going back to retouch prior portions of his epic by hints and insertions derived from them, and moreover reserving what he could not work into *Paradise Lost* from them for more leisurely use in his *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*. For *Samson Agonistes*, indeed, Mr. Edmundson provides a special and more express Vondelian original in a drama of Vondel's on the same Biblical hero published in 1660.

Mr. Edmundson, all this notwithstanding, may contrive to admire and revere Milton as much as he says he does ; but not even the wretched Lauder, whom he so properly scorns, dared a speculation of such intrinsic damage as Mr. Edmundson's to the name and fame of Milton. For to what does it amount? To nothing less than an instruction to us to conceive that the blind poet, all the while that he was publicly invoking for his aid God's Holy Spirit, all the while that he was professing dependence only on the Heavenly Muse that had been heard of old on Oreb and Sinai and by Sion hill and the brook of Siloa, all the while that he could describe this Muse as visiting him unimplored in the night-watches, dictating to him almost

in his slumbers, and thus easily inspiring his unpremeditated verse,—that all this while he was taking good care that this Muse should receive from himself continuous qualification for her office, by being fed unawares beforehand every day with carefully selected morsels from the books of a contemporary Dutchman !

But what of that array of parallelisms which Mr. Edmundson exhibits as actual demonstration, in his opinion, of Milton's indebtedness to Vondel, whether we like the conception of such indebtedness or not ?

Most of the parallelisms, more than nineteen-twentieths of them, I may say at once, are disposed of at first sight by the simple consideration, already insisted on, of the hereditary character of the themes of the two poets, and the established tradition in the mind of Christendom of certain personages, incidents, and situations, as belonging to these themes by Biblical and prescriptive right. Lucifer, Beelzebub, Belial, Gabriel, Michael, and Raphael were common property ; and, if a poet introduced Lucifer or Beelzebub, Gabriel or Michael, into a poem, what could he do but make them look and speak, to the best of his ability, in conformity with general expectation ? The Angelic Wars in Heaven, the rout of the Rebel Angels, their expulsion into Hell, their wingings thence upwards again through the spaces of the new starry Cosmos, the Ptolemaic constitution of this Cosmos, the infant Earth in the midst of it, and Adam and Eve on this earth in their Paradise of foliage and beauty : these also were common property ; and, if any poet ventured on those subjects, he had similarly to conform to tradition and expectation in essentials, whatever variation of picturing or of wording his genius might enable him to effect in particulars. Take, for a more special example, the enumeration that would be expected in every description of Paradise of the various animals that frisked about Adam in his state of innocence, acknowledging his lordship. Vondel does the thing thus :—

“ De bergleeuw kwispelde hem aan met zijnen staart,
En loech den meester toe. De tijger lei zijn naard
Voor's Koning's voeten af. De landstier boog zijn horen,
En d'olifant zijn snuit. De beer vergat zijn toren.”

In Mr. Edmundson's translation the passage stands thus :—

“ The lion gazed upon his lord and wagged
His tail. The tiger laid his savageness
Aside before his master's feet. The ox

Bowed low his horns, the elephant his trunk ;
The bear forgot his fierceness."

"These details," Mr. Edmundson adds, "seem a little grotesque and undignified, but almost unaltered they make their appearance clothed in Miltonic apparel." He then quotes the following passage from *Paradise Lost*, IV. 340, but omits the last portion of it :—

" About them frisking played
All beasts of the earth, since wild, and of all chase
In wood or wilderness, forest or den.
Sporting the lion ramped, and in his paw
Dandled the kid ; bears, tigers, ounces, pards,
Gambolled before them ; the unwieldy elephant,
To make them mirth, used all his might, and wreathed
His lithe proboscis ; close the serpent sly,
Insinuating, wove with Gordian twine
His braided train."

Does Mr. Edmundson actually think that* Milton had to go to Vondel's rather clumsy bit of zoology for the suggestion of this passage? Was not a naming of some of the beasts that gambolled round Adam and Eve a *sine qua non* in any description of Paradise ; and, if there was to be a naming of the beasts, could the lion and the elephant be omitted, or could the elephant be named without mention of his trunk? If Milton could not think of sufficiently representative beasts for himself, but had to obtain help from lists in previous poets, were there not scores of such lists at his hand, in *Sylvester's Du Bartas* and elsewhere, much better than Vondel's? And, if Milton is to be supposed thus always necessarily dependent on some predecessor or predecessors for even the most obvious and easy of the conceptions which his theme required, what of Vondel himself in like cases? Why should Vondel be credited with having been the first in any conception which seems to be common between him and Milton? If this question had occurred to Mr. Edmundson, and he had given it due extension, he would have saved himself a world of trouble. He would have seen that the same inquiry that has been so strenuously moved respecting Milton's originality in this or that may be moved as to Vondel's in exactly the same connexions. He would have seen that at the back of Vondel too there was a series of previous poets, all of whom had manipulated the same Biblical traditions, and so that Vondel's poems themselves were to a great extent

but constructions out of inherited materials and are full of inherited conceptions.

But, granted the hereditary character of the Biblical themes, and the tradition of certain incidents and situations as inseparable from those themes, may there not be such close and minute verbal parallelisms in the treatment of the incidents and situations as can be accounted for only by the supposition of actual borrowing by the later poet from the earlier? By way of answer to this question, let us look at one or two of Mr. Edmundson's parallelisms that may be pointed to as verbally the closest.

Here is the Dutch of a passage in Vondel's *Lucifer* in which Belial, standing with Beelzebub on the brink of Heaven, calls Beelzebub's attention to the upward flight towards them of Apollion, on that Angel's return from the mission on which he had been despatched by Lucifer for the discovery and examination of the newly-created Earth :—

“ Hij steigert steil, van kreits in kreits, op ons gezicht
 Hij streeft den wind voorbij, en laat een spoor van licht
 En glansen achter zich, waar zijn gezwinde wieken
 De wolken breken. Hij begint ons lucht te rieken,
 In eenen andren dag en schooner zonneshijn,
 Daar 't licht zich spiegelt in het blaauwe kristalijn.
 De hemelkloten zien met hun gezicht, van onder,
 Terwijl hij tijst, hem na, een ieder in't bijzonder,
 Verwonderd om dien vaart en goddelijken zwier,
 Die hun geen Engel schijnt, maar eer een vliegend vier ;
 Geen star verschiert zoo snel.”

Mr. Edmundson translates the rhyming Alexandrines into blank verse thus :—

“ He riseth steep, with many a wheel, in view ;
 Outstrips the wind, and leaves a track of light
 And splendour after him, where his quick wings
 Winnow the clouds. And now our air he scents
 In brighter light and more resplendent sun,
 Whose sheen is mirrored in crystalline blue.
 The heavenly globes gaze on him from below,
 As he upsprings, the cynosure of each,
 Astonished at his speed and godlike shape,
 Which seems no angel, but a flying fire ;
 No star so swiftly shoots.”

Must not Milton have used this passage, Mr. Edmundson asks, in

the description in *Paradise Lost*, V. 266-272, of the Archangel Raphael's similar *descending* flight from the Empyrean to Paradise?

“ Down thither prone in flight
He speeds, and through the vast ethereal sky
Sails between worlds and worlds, with steady wing
Now on the polar winds ; then with quick fan
Winnows the buxom air, till, within soar
Of towering eagles, to all the fowls he seems
A phoenix, gazed by all ”

Observe, however, the extreme economy and caution which Mr. Edmundson attributes to Milton. Not to attract too much attention to his pilferings by using all the good things of Vondel's passage at once or in one connexion, he has already snipped out of it, Mr. Edmundson would have us believe, the flying-fire image and the shooting-star image, and used them in other places¹ Had not Satan, when after his rest in the heart of Chaos he resumed his ascent through the upper Chaos in quest of the New World above it, sprung upward “*like a pyramid of fire*” (II. 1013); and, when Uriel, the Angel of the Sun, passed from that luminary to the Earth (IV. 555-557), how had he come?

“ Gliding through the even
On a sunbeam, *swift as a shooting star*
In autumn thwarts the night.”

And this, it seems, we are to take as a demonstrated example of Milton's borrowings from Vondel! To what straits may the wit of a scholar be reduced when he spurs a hobby! Upwards, or downwards, or horizontally, through the starry spaces, must not the flight of an Angel be swift; and to what would any imagination so naturally liken the swift flight of a radiant messenger through those spaces as to flying fire or the track of a shooting star? Could not Milton think of a flying fire or a shooting star for himself? Because of his very blindness, as we have already seen, was not the use of this one metaphor of radiance, of light in all its forms and possibilities, peculiarly frequent with him for all varieties of purposes? But, in fact, had he not had a shooting star of his own in his possession, and a much finer one than Vondel's, from a date long before that of his blindness, and long before that of Vondel's invention of any article of the kind for his *Lucifer*? Mr. Edmundson, it seems, forgot those lines in *Comus*, spoken by the Attendant Spirit:—

“ Therefore, when any favoured of high Jove
 Chances to pass through this adventurous glade,
 Swift as the sparkle of a glancing star
 I shoot from heaven, to give him safe convoy.”

Again, Milton's “*pyramid of fire*” for Satan's suddenly recommenced ascent through Chaos is not the same image at all as Vondel's “*fly-ing fire*” in the quoted passage, but much grander and more distinct. Further still, has not Mr. Edmundson taken liberties with Vondel's original by importing Miltonisms into his translation of it which have the effect of intensifying the supposed parallelism? Is “*with many a wheel*” an exact translation of the Dutch “*van kreits in kreits*”? is it not rather a substitution derived from Milton's own line, “*Throws his steep flight in many an aery wheel,*” in the description, P. L. III. 741-2, of Satan's spiral motion from the Sun downwards before he alights on the Earth at Mount Niphates? The substitution is all the more illegitimate inasmuch as Mr. Edmundson proceeds to take advantage of it by quoting this very line of Milton as a copy of the line in Vondel which he has doctored, unwittingly doubtless, into the necessary degree of similarity. Again, where in Vondel's Dutch is the precise phrase “*Winnow the clouds*”? The word in the Dutch is not *winnow* but *break*; and, though Mr. Edmundson conscientiously mentions this fact in a footnote, it was hardly fair to leave Milton's own word *winnow*, with all its Miltonic associations, doing duty for quite a different word in a bit of translated text adduced for the particular purpose which Mr. Edmundson had in view.

For another example, take Mr. Edmundson's translation of two fragments of Apollion's description in Vondel's drama of the appearance of Adam and Eve in Paradise:—

“ Both man and wife are shaped with equal grace,
 Perfect from head to foot. Adam of right
 In valour's traits and dignity of form
 Excel, as ruler of the Earth elect.
 But all a bridegroom lists in Eve is found, —
 Fineness of limb, a softer flesh and skin,
 A kindlier tint, and eyes of ravishment.

There shines no seraph bright in heavenly courts
 Like Eve amidst her hanging hair, a screen
 Of golden beams, which from the head streams down
 In waves of light, and falls upon her back.”

The corresponding verses in Milton (IV. 288-306) are these —

“ Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall,
 Godlike erect, with native honour clad
 In naked majesty, seemed lords of all. . . .
 Not equal, as their sex not equal seemed ;
 For contemplation he and valour formed,
 For softness she and sweet attractive grace.

She as a veil down to the slender waist
 Her unadorned golden tresses wore
 Dishevelled, but in wanton ringlets waved.”

No need to ask which of the poets excels the other here, which is the more tasteful: the question is whether Milton would not have imagined his Adam and Eve exactly as he has done if there had been no Vondel before him,—whether, in fact, he could have imagined them one whit otherwise. There *must* be an Adam and Eve in Milton's Paradise, as in any other poet's; and hardly anything was left optional to him in his contrasted portraits of the two,—unless indeed, to spite Vondel, he had chosen to make his Eve dark-haired! He could hardly have ventured on that without consulting Adam; and so there is the astounding coincidence that Milton's Eve and Vondel's are pretty much alike in the matter of the golden hue of their dishevelled tresses.

In Vondel's drama, as in the Anglo-Saxon *Credmon's* Paraphrase of Genesis, and perhaps every other poem that had treated of Satan's revolt and fall, the haughty character of Satan is represented by characteristic speeches put into his mouth. The following is Mr. Edmundson's version of a speech of Lucifer in colloquy with Beelzebub. It must be supposed as spoken in Heaven, while Lucifer is contemplating his resistance to the Almighty and the possible result:—

“ Thou reasonest well. Essential powers care not
 So easy to let slip their lawful right.
 Th' Almighty, first of all, by His own law
 Is bound. To change becomes Him least. Am I
 A Son of Light, a Ruler over Light?
 My rightful claims I shall assert. To force
 I yield not, nor arch-tyrant's violence.
 Let yield who will, I move not one foot back.
 My fatherland is here. Nor misery,
 Nor overthrow, nor curse shall frighten me,
 Nor tame. To perish or to reach this port

Is my resolve. Is't fated that I fall,
 Of rank and lustre rest : then let me fall,
 So that I fall this crown upon my head,
 This sceptre in my grasp, esteem'd by friends
 And all the thousands who embrace my cause.
 A fall like that to honour tends and praise
 Imperishable. *Rather would I be
 The first prince in some lower court than in
 The Blessed Light the second, or e'en less "*

Milton, Mr. Edmundson would have us believe, kept this passage in his repertory of specially available bits from Vondel ; but, with his accustomed cunning, he did not use it all in one place, but put a crumb of it here, a crumb of it there, another crumb in a third place, and another in a fourth. The several places, in the order in which Mr. Edmundson cites them, are *Par. Lost*, V. 787-792, *Samson Agonistes*, 300-310, *Par. Lost*, I. 94-111, and *Par. Lost*, I. 250-263. Let any sensible man look at those passages of Milton for himself, and this miserable hypothesis that they are crumbs from Vondel will vanish in contempt, overwhelmed as it will be by the constant perception that in these passages, as in all others where there is any semblance of coincidence with Vondel, Milton was simply expressing after his grand and all-superseding fashion what had been commonplaces in the poetic tradition of Satan's character and revolt for ages before Vondel had used them in his drama. The last of the passages cited, however, may be quoted here, inasmuch as it contains that particular coincidence which is supposed to be the most clinching in Vondel's favour. To this day, it is said, the most familiar quotation from Vondel in the mouths of his Dutch countrymen is the sentence printed above in italics, the original of which is this :—

*" En liever d'eerste vorst in enig lager hof
 Dan in't gezatigd licht de tweede, of nog een minder."*

Well, how runs the famous passage, *Par. Lost*, I. 249-263, in which Satan, roused from his first stupor in Hell, declares to Beelzebub his acquiescence with his new condition?—

*" Farewell, happy fields,
 Where joy for ever dwells ! Hail, horrors ! hail,
 Infernal World ! and thou, profoundest Hell,
 Receive thy new possessor,— one who brings
 A mind not to be changed by place or time.*

The mind is its own place, and in itself
 Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.
 What matter where, if I be still the same,
 And what I should be, all but less than he
 Whom thunder hath made greater? Here at least
 We shall be free; the Almighty hath not built
 Here for his envy, will not drive us hence:
 Here we may reign secure; and, in my choice,
To reign is worth ambition, though in Hell.
Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven."

Had Milton, so far Vondel's superior in every faculty of mind as every comparison between them shows him to have been,—had Milton to go to Vondel for the conception here *Italicised*? Not he! If he could not invent it for himself, poor man, it was at hand for him in English books. Among Todd's extracts, for example, there is an extract from an imagined discourse of Satan's which occurs in Stafford's *Nzobe*, an English prose-treatise, the second edition of which was published in London by Humphrey Lownes in 1611. "They say, forsooth," the Ruined Archangel is here made to explain, "that pride was the cause of my fall, and that I dwell where there is "nothing but weeping, howling, and gnashing of teeth; of which that "falsehood was the authour I will make you plainlie perceive. True "it is, Sir, that I, storming at the name of Supremacie, dispossessed "me of all pleasures; and the Seraphim and Cherubim, Throni, "Dominationes, Virtutes, Potestates, Principatus, Archangeli, Angeli, "and all the Celestial Hierarchieyes, with a shout of applause, sung my "departure out of Heaven: my *Alleluia* was turned into an *Ehu*; "and too soon I found that I was *corruptibilis ab alio*, though not in "alio, and that he that gave me my being could againe take it from "mee. Now, forasmuch as I was once an Angell of Light, it was the "will of Wisedome to confine me to darknes and to create me "Prince thereof; so that I who could not obey in Heaven, might com- "mand in Hell. And, believe mee, Sir, I had rather controule within "my dark diocese than to reinhabite CÆLUM EMPYREUM, and there live "in subjection, under check." The whole passage is interesting as exemplifying the definiteness of that set of imaginations respecting Satan's personality and history which had come down to Vondel and Milton alike as a centuries-old inheritance; but what is most interesting in it for our present purpose is the proof which it seems to furnish that the particular idea *Italicised* above as perhaps the most startling

example in all Milton of a coincidence of conception between him and Vondel was already in the air and waiting for them before either of them wrote a verse.

"Rather would I be
The first prince in some lower court than in
The Blessed Light the second"

was Vondel's weaker version for the Dutch, we may therefore suppose, of a proverbial expression which came out from the stronger stamp of Milton's mintage Englished for ever thus:—

"Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven."

One specimen more of Mr. Edmundson's examples of Milton's debts to Vondel. If there are any two passages in *Paradise Lost* the correct interpretation of which might be made a test of adequate knowledge and appreciation of the poem as a whole, they are these:—

"Such place Eternal Justice had prepared
For those rebellious; here their prison ordained
In utter darkness, and their portion set,
As far removed from God and light of Heaven
As from the centre thence to the utmost pole."

P. L., I. 70-74.

"Weighs his spread wings, at leisure to behold
Far off the empyreal Heaven, extended wide
In circuit, undetermined square or round,
With opal towers and battlements adorned
Of living sapphire, once his native seat,
And, fast by, hanging in a golden chain,
This pendent World, in bigness as a star
Of smallest magnitude close by the moon."

P. L., II. 1046-1053.

The first of these gives the measurement of the vast distance down in Chaos at which Hell, in Milton's scheme, lay separated from Heaven or the Empyrean. It was equal to three semi-diameters of that Astronomical or Mundane Universe which God's new act of Creation had hung in Chaos between Heaven and Hell; and consequently the depth of the belt of Chaos which had been left intervening between the nadir or lowest pole of that Astronomical Universe and the uppermost boss or bulge of Hell was exactly one of these semi-diameters. It was up through this intervening belt of Chaos that Satan had to make his way in his expedition from Hell in search of the new Universe; and the second passage describes the spectacle

that broke upon his gaze when his toilsome ascent had been all but completed, and he could stay his wings in the calmer air which approached the confines of the new Universe and the angles of its contact at the zenith with the great Empyrean itself. He could then behold again the jewelled boundaries, high above him, of this great Empyrean, his recent well-known home, and hanging thence, as in a golden chain, that new object, unknown to him heretofore, which he had come to investigate,—the pendent Starry World wherein Man had existence. In comparison with the dimensions of the Empyrean from which it hung, this pendent World,—*i.e.* the whole Cosmos of the wheeling spheres and luminaries,—was but as a star of the smallest magnitude seen on the edge of the full or crescent moon. Now, will it be believed that Mr. Edmundson finds purloining from Vondel even in this cardinal matter of the entire physical structure and mapping out of Milton's epic? The purloining is not this time, Mr. Edmundson finds, from Vondel's *Lucifer*, which had been published before Milton began his epic in earnest; but it is from Vondel's *Joannes Boetgeant* and his *Bespiegelingen van God en Godsdienst*, published severally in 1662 and 1661, when Milton was already far on with his epic! What is Mr. Edmundson's warrant? It lies in a combination of two passages, or rather of shreds from two passages, in these two later poems of Vondel. In one passage in the *Bespiegelingen*, the subject being the inconceivable immensity of the physical Universe, Vondel winds up with this expression:—

“En wat is dit heelal, in dien men God beschouw,
In grootheid meerder dan een druppel morgendouw?”

translated by Mr. Edmundson thus:—

“What is this universe, if viewed by God,
In bulk, but as a drop of morning-dew?”

The other passage is in the *Joannes Boetgeant*, and is cited by Mr. Edmundson chiefly with reference to Milton's supposed use of that poem in his subsequent and smaller epic, *Paradise Regained*. It yields, however, Mr. Edmundson thinks, a conception which had struck Milton so much that he went back with it into the already-written text of the First Book of his *Paradise Lost*, and carefully worked it into the five lines of that text where Hell's position in space relatively to Heaven and to Man's World is so exactly defined. For Vondel, finding it necessary in his *Joannes Boetgeant* to make

Lucifer call a Council or Assembly of his demons for the purpose of deliberation, had also had occasion to describe the place of the infernal congress ; and he had described it thus :—

“ Daar, recht in 't middelpunt des aardrijks, even wijd
Van Zuid-en Noord-as, 't hof op ketens hangt en snijdt
De spil der wereld juist in twee gelijke deelen.”

In Mr. Edmundson's English the lines are given as follows :—

“ Where right in centre of the Earth it lies,
As far from Southern as from Northern pole,
And cuts in equal parts, hanging in chains,
The axis of the world.”

When Mr. Edmundson says that these lines had not failed to “arrest Milton's attention and stimulate his imagination,” he speaks very gently in appearance, but can mean, as we have seen, nothing less, as far as *Paradise Lost* is concerned, than that Milton, having had the lines read to him from Vondel's *Joannes Boetgerant* some time in 1662 or 1663, called for the manuscript of the already written First Book of his *Paradise Lost*, and mended the text there, by Vondel's help, so that we now read at lines 73, 74, that stupendous definition of the contour of Hell in its measured relations to the whole of Physical Infinitude :—

“ As far removed from God and light of Heaven
As from the centre thrice to the utmost pole.”

Now, not to dwell on such a trifle as that Mr. Edmundson by using in his translation the word *pole*, which does not occur in the Dutch, again imports a particle from Milton's text into those very lines of Vondel by which he is supposed to have been stimulated, what a failure of imaginative grasp, what a missing of all that is essentially Miltonic in the construction of Milton's epic, to confound for one moment Milton's Hell, declared from the first to be extra-mundane and all but illimitably down in the depths of Chaos, with that pigmy Hell at the centre of the Earth itself which suffices for Vondel in the quoted passage! And where is the discernible analogy between that *bisection* of the axis of the Earth by Vondel's Hell which is all that the passage requires and that *trisection* in Milton of the huger interval which separates his Empyrean from his wholly extra-mundane Hell? To think that Milton had not this physical configuration of his Infinitude already settled and perfect in his mind when he began

his epic, to think that it was a recast or afterthought on any suggestion from Vondel, is utterly absurd; and it is nearly as absurd to think that Vondel's passage induced him to go back to modify any particular even in the expression of his previously conceived sketch. The absurdity extends itself, however, into Mr. Edmundson's manipulation of the fancied resemblance to Vondel in Milton's other passage, where Satan beholds the newly created World pendent from the Empyrean like a small star on the moon's edge. To get at any resemblance at all here, Mr. Edmundson has, in the first place, to resort again to his strange fancy that it was Milton's habit, when he used a passage from Vondel, to keep back some suggestion from it for future service in a fitter context. Thus the same Vondelian passage that had suggested to him the measurement "*from the centre thrice to the utmost pole*" in lines 73, 74, of Book I., had contained, in the words "*hanging in chains*," an image for which he had no need in connexion with that measurement. But was he to lose the thing altogether? No! He recollected this image in the *Joannes Boetjesant*, and brought it in afterwards in a different connexion at lines 1046-1053 of Book II., cleverly blending it there with the "*drop of morning-dew*" simile in Vondel's *Bespiegelingen*! Hence, when the New World is seen in those lines pendent from the Empyrean, it is seen pendent as if "*hanging in a golden chain*." One might have supposed that Milton could have imagined this mode of pendency for himself, and even that the "golden chain" he had in view was that mystic structure of shining stairs up from the zenith of the Cosmos to the very gate of Heaven which he soon afterwards offers as the optical equivalent for the same purpose. But Mr. Edmundson knows better. Milton fetched the "chains" he now needed from Vondel's *Joannes Boetjesant*, only burnishing them up and making them "golden." Yes! but what did he do with the "drop of morning-dew" from Vondel's *Bespiegelingen*? There is nothing about a dewdrop in Milton's lines; the smallness of the pendent Universe there in comparison with the Empyrean from which it depends being represented by no such image, but by that of a minute star close underneath the moon's orb. Well, but had not Vondel spoken of the whole Universe as being in God's sight no more than "a drop of morning-dew"; and, though there was no notion of pendency from anything in the place where Vondel had thus thought of the dewdrop, must not Milton have had the Vondelian conception

of the dewdrop as an image of smallness,—a conception so vastly original, so unlike anything that had occurred to the wit of man before!—latently in his mind when he dictated his passage about the pendency of Man's small Universe from the greater Empyrean? Or, if Milton himself did not show that it was in his mind, had not one of his commentators been more candid? Had not the present editor, for example, interpreting Milton's meaning, spoken of the whole Mundane Universe, in Milton's imagination of it, as "hung drop-like" from the Empyrean into Chaos? So Mr. Edmundson points out, quoting the very words. His implication respecting Milton, so far as I can make it out, is that *qui facit per alium facit per se*.

Having given some specimens of Mr. Edmundson's collection of parallelisms, I may add that I have not met in all the rest of the collection a single parallelism that could convince me of a direct use by Milton in his *Paradise Lost* of any passage in Vondel. My opinion, indeed, after considering all the parallelisms produced by Mr. Edmundson, is that it would be quite possible to maintain the extreme position that *Paradise Lost* would have been exactly the same as it is if Vondel's poems had never been written, or if Vondel himself had never existed.¹ That position, however, might be too

¹ This appears to have been, on the whole, the opinion of Vondel's latest and ablest editor, M. Van Lennep, naturally prepossessed though we may imagine him to have been in Vondel's favour, and so disposed to make the most of the coincidences between Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Vondel's *Luifer*. In his "*Kritisch Overzicht van Luifer*," appended to the text of the drama in one of the volumes of the collective edition of Vondel's works (1861), he discusses the question that had been moved among his countrymen as to Milton's possible obligations to Vondel; and, after acknowledging some of the more notable coincidences that had been pointed out, he pronounces judgment thus:—"And yet . . . I do not regard it as proved that Milton was acquainted with Vondel or his tragedy. "It is a very common phenomenon that men of intellect fix their thoughts about the same time on the same subject; and, in a period when theological questions were the order of the day, two persons may very well have conceived the design of celebrating the Fall of the Angels, without the work of the one having offered any suggestion of the subject to the other. When in such a case two men of genius treat similar material, it cannot but be that their poems will exhibit points of agreement: the more so when both have drawn from a common source,—the Bible. Still, after all, the form and method of treatment adopted by the two poets were so different that the paths they pursued were necessarily divergent." For this translated passage from M. Van Lennep's Dutch I have to thank Mr. Hugh A. Webster, the Librarian of Edinburgh University.

extreme. Mr. Gosse thinks that Vondel's *Lucifer* was known to Milton; and Mr. Gosse's opinion on such a subject, taken along with the already explained historical probabilities of the case, ought to count for something. Let the vote, then, be that Milton did somehow contrive, amid the difficulties of his blindness, to superimpose upon all the mass of his previous readings from his youth onwards some new readings in the *Lucifer*, and in other poems, of his celebrated Dutch contemporary. That is all that is needed; and it is a very different speculation from Mr. Edmundson's. The matter of a man's readings, in any day or week of his life, does not remain distinct from his mind as already constituted, or only as a something additional that his mind can thenceforth work upon; it is necessarily, like all his other new experiences, transmuted, there and then, into the very substance of his mind, modifying the very structure of his thinking faculty for all its future operations of reasoning, imagining, or whatever else. In this sense only,—that, when any mind is stirred, all its contents are stirred,—is there any worth whatever, I believe, in any theory of Milton's indebtedness to any particular author; and all speculations as to Milton's indebtedness to particular authors in any other and less honourable sense have in them, I believe, whether they know it or not, the transmitted taint of the wretched Lauder's, and are doomed inevitably to the fate that attended their prototype.

PARADISE LOST:

A POEM IN TWELVE BOOKS

THE AUTHOR

JOHN MILTON

COMMENDATORY VERSES

PREFIXED TO THE SECOND EDITION.

IN *PARADISUM AMISSAM* SUMMI POETÆ JOHANNIS MILTONI.

QUI legis *Amissam Paradisum*, grandia magni
Carmina Miltoni, quid nisi cuncta legis ?
Res cunctas, et cunctarum primordia rerum,
Et fata, et fines, continet iste liber.
Intima panduntur magni penetralia Mundi,
Scribitur et toto quicquid in Orbe latet ;
Terræque, tractusque maris, cœlumque profundum,
Sulphureumque Erebi flammivomumque specus ;
Quæque colunt terras, pontumque, et Tartara cæca,
Quæque colunt summi lucida regna poli ;
Et quodcunque ullis conclusum est finibus usquam ;
Et sine fine Chaos, et sine fine Deus ;
Et sine fine magis, si quid magis est sine fine,
In Christo erga homines conciliatus amor.
Hæc qui speraret quis crederet esse futurum ?
Et tamen hæc hodie terra Britannia legit.
O quantos in bella duces, quæ protulit arma !
Quæ canit, et quantâ prælia dira tubâ !
Cœlestes acies, atque in certamine Cœlum !
Et quæ cœlestes pugna deceret agros !

Quantus in ætheriis tollit se Lucifer armis,
 Atque ipso graditur vix Michaele minor !
 Quantis et quam funestis concurritur iris,
 Dum ferus hic stellas protegit, ille rapit !
 Dum vulsos montes ceu tela reciproca torquent,
 Et non mortali desuper igne pluunt,
 Stat dubius cui se parti concedat Olympus,
 Et metuit pugnæ non superesse suæ.
 At simul in cœlis Messiæ insignia fulgent,
 Et currus animæ, armaque digna Deo,
 Horrendumque rotæ strident, et sæva rotarum
 Erumpunt torvis fulgura luminibus,
 Et flammæ vibrant, et vera tonitrua rauco
 Admistis flammis insonuere polo,
 Excidit attonitis mens omnis, et impetus omnis,
 Et cassis dextris irrita tela cadunt ;
 Ad pœnas fugiunt, et, ceu foret Orcus asylum,
 Infernis certant condere se tenebris.
 Cedite, Romani Scriptores ; cedite, Graii ;
 Et quos fama recens vel celebravit anus :
 Hæc quicunque leget tantum cecinisse putabit
 Mæonidem ranas, Virgilium culices.

S. B., M.D.

ON PARADISE LOST

WHEN I beheld the Poet blind, yet bold,
 In slender book his vast design unfold—
 Messiah crowned, God's reconciled decree,
 Rebelling Angels, the Forbidden Tree,
 Heaven, Hell, Earth, Chaos, All—the argument
 Held me a while misdoubting his intent,
 That he would ruin (for I saw him strong)

The sacred truths to fable and old song
(So Samson groped the temple's posts in spite),
The world o'erwhelming to revenge his sight.

Yet, as I read, soon growing less severe,
I liked his project, the success did fear—
Through that wide field how he his way should find
O'er which lame Faith leads Understanding blind ;
Lest he perplexed the things he would explain,
And what was easy he should render vain.

Or, if a work so infinite he spanned,
Jealous I was that some less skilful hand
(Such as disquiet always what is well,
And by ill-imitating would excel),
Might hence presume the whole Creation's day
To change in scenes, and show it in a play.

Pardon me, mighty Poet ; nor despise
My causeless, yet not impious, surmise.
But I am now convinced, and none will dare
Within thy labours to pretend a share.
Thou hast not missed one thought that could be fit,
And all that was improper dost omit ;
So that no room is here for writers left,
But to detect their ignorance or theft.

The majesty which through thy work doth reign
Draws the devout, deterring the profane.
And things divine thou treat'st of in such state
As them preserves, and thee, inviolate.
At once delight and horror on us seize ;
Thou sing'st with so much gravity and ease,
And above human flight dost soar aloft
With plume so strong, so equal, and so soft.
The bird named from the Paradise you sing
So never flags, but always keeps on wing.

Where could'st thou words of such a compass find ?
Whence furnish such a vast expense of mind ?

Just Heaven, thee like Tiresias to requite,
Rewards with prophecy thy loss of sight.

Well might'st thou scorn thy readers to allure
With tinkling rime, of thy own sense secure ;
While the Town-Bayes writes all the while and spells,
And, like a pack-horse, tires without his bells.
Their fancies like our bushy points appear ;
The poets tag them, we for fashion wear.
I too, transported by the mode, offend,
And, while I meant to *praise* thee, must *commend*.
Thy verse, created, like thy theme sublime,
In number, weight, and measure, needs not rime.

A. M.

THE VERSE

THE measure is English heroic verse without rime, as that of Homer in Greek, and of Virgil in Latin,—rime being no necessary adjunct or true ornament of poem or good verse, in longer works especially, but the invention of a barbarous age, to set off wretched matter and lame metre ; graced indeed since by the use of some famous modern poets, carried away by custom, but much to their own vexation, hindrance, and constraint to express many things otherwise, and for the most part worse, than else they would have expressed them. Not without cause therefore some both Italian and Spanish poets of prime note have rejected rime both in longer and shorter works, as have also long since our best English tragedies, as a thing of itself, to all judicious ears, trivial and of no true musical delight ; which consists only in apt numbers, fit quantity of syllables, and the sense variously drawn out from one verse into another, not in the jingling sound of like endings,— a fault avoided by the learned ancients both in poetry and all good oratory. This neglect then of rime so little is to be taken for a defect, though it may seem so perhaps to vulgar readers, that it rather is to be esteemed an example set, the first in English, of ancient liberty recovered to heroic poem from the troublesome and modern bondage of riming.

PARADISE LOST

BOOK I

THE ARGUMENT

This First Book proposes, first in brief, the whole subject—Man's disobedience, and the loss thereupon of Paradise, wherein he was placed : then touches the prime cause of his fall—the Serpent, or rather Satan in the Serpent ; who, revolting from God, and drawing to his side many legions of Angels, was, by the command of God, driven out of Heaven, with all his crew, into the great Deep. Which action passed over, the Poem hastens into the midst of things ; presenting Satan, with his Angels, now fallen into Hell—described here not in the Centre (for heaven and earth may be supposed as yet not made, certainly not yet accused), but in a place of utter darkness, fittest called Chaos. Here Satan, with his Angels lying on the burning lake, thunder-struck and astonished, after a certain space recovers, as from confusion ; calls up him who, next in order and dignity, lay by him : they confer of their miserable fall. Satan awakens all his legions, who lay till then in the same manner confounded. They rise : their numbers ; array of battle ; their chief leaders named, according to the idols known afterwards in Canaan and the countries adjoining. To these Satan directs his speech ; comforts them with hope yet of regaining Heaven ; but tells them, lastly, of a new world and new kind of creature to be created, according to an ancient prophecy, or report, in Heaven—for that Angels were long before this visible creation was the opinion of many ancient Fathers. To find out the truth of this prophecy, and what to determine thereon, he refers to a full council. What his associates thence attempt. Pandemonium, the palace of Satan, rises, suddenly built out of the Deep : the infernal Peers there sit in council.

OF Man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
Brought death into the World, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing, Heavenly Muse, that, on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire

That shepherd who first taught the chosen seed
In the beginning how the heavens and earth
Rose out of Chaos : or, if Sion hill 10
Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flowed
Fast by the oracle of God, I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.
And chiefly Thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer
Before all temples the upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for Thou know'st ; Thou from the first
Wast present, and, with mighty wings outspread, 20
Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast Abyss,
And mad'st it pregnant : what in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support ;
That, to the highth of this great argument,
I may assert Eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men.

Say first—for Heaven hides nothing from thy view,
Nor the deep tract of Hell—say first what cause
Moved our grand Parents, in that happy state,
Favoured of Heaven so highly, to fall off 30
From their Creator, and transgress his will
For one restraint, lords of the World besides.
Who first seduced them to that foul revolt ?

The infernal Serpent ; he it was whose guile,
Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived
The mother of mankind, what time his pride
Had cast him out from Heaven, with all his host
Of rebel Angels, by whose aid, aspiring
To set himself in glory above his peers,
He trusted to have equalled the Most High, 40
If he opposed, and, with ambitious aim
Against the throne and monarchy of God,

Raised impious war in Heaven and battle proud,
With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power
Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky,
With hideous ruin and combustion, down
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
In adamant chains and penal fire,
Who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms.

Nine times the space that measures day and night 50
To mortal men, he, with his horrid crew,
Lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gulf,
Confounded, though immortal. But his doom
Reserved him to more wrath; for now the thought
Both of lost happiness and lasting pain
Torments him: round he throws his baleful eyes,
That witnessed huge affliction and dismay,
Mixed with obdurate pride and steadfast hate.
At once, as far as Angel's ken, he views
The dismal situation waste and wild. 60
A dungeon horrible, on all sides round,
As one great furnace flamed; yet from those flames
No light; but rather darkness visible
Served only to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell, hope never comes
That comes to all, but torture without end
Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed.
Such place Eternal Justice had prepared 70
For those rebellious; here their prison ordained
In utter darkness, and their portion set,
As far removed from God and light of Heaven
As from the centre thrice to the utmost pole.
Oh how unlike the place from whence they fell!
There the companions of his fall, o'erwhelmed
With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire,

He soon discerns ; and, weltering by his side,
One next himself in power, and next in crime,
Long after known in Palestine, and named 80
BEËLZEBUB. To whom the Arch-Enemy,
And thence in Heaven called SATAN, with bold words
Breaking the horrid silence, thus began :—

“If thou beest he—but Oh how fallen ! how changed
From him !—who, in the happy realms of light,
Clothed with transcendent brightness, didst outshine
Myriads, though bright—if he whom mutual league,
United thoughts and counsels, equal hope
And hazard in the glorious enterprise,
Joined with me once, now misery hath joined 90
In equal ruin ; into what pit thou seest
From what highth fallen : so much the stronger proved
He with his thunder : and till then who knew
The force of those dire arms ? Yet not for those,
Nor what the potent Victor in his rage
Can else inflict, do I repent, or change,
Though changed in outward lustre, that fixed mind,
And high disdain from sense of injured merit,
That with the Mightiest raised me to contend,
And to the fierce contention brought along 100
Innumerable force of Spirits armed,
That durst dislike his reign, and, me preferring,
His utmost power with adverse power opposed
In dubious battle on the plains of Heaven,
And shook his throne. What though the field be lost ?
All is not lost—the unconquerable will,
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield ;
And what is else not to be overcome ?
That glory never shall his wrath or might 110
Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace
With suppliant knee, and deify his power

Sheer o'er the crystal battlements : from morn
To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,
A summer's day, and with the setting sun
Dropt from the zenith, like a falling star,
On Lemnos, the Ægæan isle. Thus they relate,
Erring ; for he with this rebellious rout
Fell long before ; nor aught availed him now ⁶¹⁶
To have built in Heaven high towers ; nor did he scape ⁶¹⁹
By all his engines, but was headlong sent, 750
With his industrious crew, to build in Hell.

Meanwhile the wingèd Haralds, by command
Of sovran power, with awful ceremony
And trumpet's sound, throughout the host proclaim
A solemn council forthwith to be held
At Pandemonium, the high capital
Of Satan and his peers. Their summons called
From every band and squarèd regiment
By place or choice the worthiest : they anon
With hundreds and with thousands trooping came 760
Attended. All access was thronged ; the gates
And porches wide, but chief the spacious hall
(Though like a covered field, where champions bold
Wont ride in armed, and at the Soldan's chair
Defied the best of Panim chivalry
To mortal combat, or career with lance),
Thick swarmed, both on the ground and in the air,
Brushed with the hiss of rustling wings. As bees
In spring-time, when the Sun with Taurus rides,
Pour forth their populous youth about the hive 770
In clusters ; they among fresh dews and flowers
Fly to and fro, or on the smoothèd plank,
The suburb of their straw-built citadel,
New rubbed with balm, expatiate, and confer
Their state-affairs : so thick the aery crowd
Swarmed and were straitened ; till, the signal given,

Behold a wonder ! They but now who seemed
In bigness to surpass Earth's giant sons,
Now less than smallest dwarfs, in narrow room
Throng numberless—like that pygmean race 780
Beyond the Indian mount ; or faery elves,
Whose midnight revels, by a forest-side
Or fountain, some belated peasant sees,
Or dreams he sees, while overhead the Moon
Sits arbitress, and nearer to the Earth
Wheels her pale course : they, on their mirth and dance
Intent, with jocund music charm his ear ,
At once with joy and fear his heart rebounds.
Thus incorporeal Spirits to smallest forms
Reduced their shapes immense, and were at large, 790
Though without number still, amidst the hall
Of that infernal court. But far within,
And in their own dimensions like themselves,
The great Seraphic Lords and Cherubim
In close recess and secret conclave sat,
A thousand demi-gods on golden seats,
Frequent and full. After short silence then,
And summons read, the great consult began.

PARADISE LOST

BOOK II

THE ARGUMENT

The consultation begun, Satan debates whether another battle he to be hazarded for the recovery of Heaven : some advise it, others dissuade. A third proposal is preferred, mentioned before by Satan—to search the truth of that prophecy or tradition in Heaven concerning another world, and another kind of creature, equal, or not much inferior, to themselves, about this time to be created. Their doubt who shall be sent on this difficult search : Satan, their chief, undertakes alone the voyage ; is honoured and applauded. The council thus ended, the rest betake them several ways and to several employments, as their inclinations lead them, to entertain the time till Satan return. He passes on his journey to Hell-gates ; finds them shut, and who sat there to guard them ; by whom at length they are opened, and discover to him the great gulf between Hell and Heaven. With what difficulty he passes through, directed by Chaos, the Power of that place, to the sight of this new World which he sought.

HIGH on a throne of royal state, which far
Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind,
Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand
Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold,
Satan exalted sat, by merit raised
To that bad eminence ; and, from despair
Thus high uplifted beyond hope, aspires
Beyond thus high, insatiate to pursue
Vain war with Heaven ; and, by success untaught,
His proud imaginations thus displayed :—

10

“ Powers and Dominions, Deities of Heaven !
For, since no deep within her gulf can hold
Immortal vigour, though oppressed and fallen,

I give not Heaven for lost : from this descent
Celestial Virtues rising will appear
More glorious and more dread than from no fall,
And trust themselves to fear no second fate !—
Me though just right, and the fixed laws of Heaven,
Did first create your leader—next, free choice,
With what besides in council or in fight 20
Hath been achieved of merit—yet this loss,
Thus far at least recovered, hath much more
Established in a safe, unenvied throne,
Yielded with full consent. The happier state
In Heaven, which follows dignity, might draw
Envy from each inferior ; but who here
Will envy whom the highest place exposes
Foremost to stand against the Thunderer's aim
Your bulwark, and condemn'd to greatest share
Of endless pain ? Where there is, then, no good 30
For which to strive, no strife can grow up there
From faction : for none sure will claim in Hell
Precedence ; none whose portion is so small
Of present pain that with ambitious mind
Will covet more ! With this advantage, then,
To union, and firm faith, and firm accord,
More than can be in Heaven, we now return
To claim our just inheritance of old,
Surer to prosper than prosperity
Could have assured us ; and by what best way, 40
Whether of open war or covert guile,
We now debate. Who can advise may speak."

He ceased ; and next him Moloch, sceptred king,
Stood up—the strongest and the fiercest Spirit
That fought in Heaven, now fiercer by despair.
His trust was with the Eternal to be deemed
Equal in strength, and rather than be less
Cared not to be at all ; with that care lost

Went all his fear : of God, or Hell, or worse,
He recked not, and these words thereafter spake :— 50
“ My sentence is for open war. Of wiles,
More unexpert, I boast not : let them
Contrive who need, or when they need ; not now.
For, while they sit contriving, shall the rest—
Millions that stand in arms, and longing wait
The signal to ascend—sit lingering here,
Heaven’s fugitives, and for their dwelling-place
Accept this dark opprobrious den of shame,
The prison of His tyranny who reigns
By our delay ? No ! let us rather choose, 60
Armed with Hell-flames and fury, all at once
O’er Heaven’s high towers to force resistless way,
Turning our tortures into horrid arms
Against the Torturer ; when, to meet the noise
Of his almighty engine, he shall hear
Infernal thunder, and, for lightning, see
Black fire and horror shot with equal rage
Among his Angels, and his throne itself
Mixed with Tartarean sulphur and strange fire,
His own invented torments. But perhaps 70
The way seems difficult, and steep to scale
With upright wing against a higher foe !
Let such bethink them, if the sleepy drench
Of that forgetful lake benumb not still,
That in our proper motion we ascend
Up to our native seat ; descent and fall
To us is adverse. Who but felt of late,
When the fierce foe hung on our broken rear
Insulting, and pursued us through the Deep,
With what compulsion and laborious flight 80
We sunk thus low ? The ascent is easy, then ;
The evil it is feared ! Should we again provoke
Our stronger, some worse way his wrath may find

To our destruction, if there be in Hell
Fear to be worse destroyed ! What can be worse
Than to dwell here, driven out from bliss, condemned
In this abhorred deep to utter woe ;
Where pain of unextinguishable fire
Must exercise us without hope of end
The vassals of his anger, when the scourge 90
Inexorably, and the torturing hour,
Calls us to penance ? More destroyed than thus,
We should be quite abolished, and expire.
What fear we then ? what doubt we to incense
His utmost ire ? which, to the highth enraged,
Will either quite consume us, and reduce
To nothing this essential—happier far
Than miserable to have eternal being !—
Or, if our substance be indeed divine,
And cannot cease to be, we are at worst 100
On this side nothing ; and by proof we feel
Our power sufficient to disturb his Heaven,
And with perpetual inroads to alarm,
Though inaccessible, his fatal throne :
Which, if not victory, is yet revenge."

He ended frowning, and his look denounced
Desperate revenge, and battle dangerous
To less than gods. On the other side up rose
Belial, in act more graceful and humane.
A fairer person lost not Heaven ; he seemed 110
For dignity composed, and high exploit.
But all was false and hollow ; though his tongue
Dropt manna, and could make the worse appear
The better reason, to perplex and dash
Maturest counsels : for his thoughts were low—
To vice industrious, but to nobler deeds
Timorous and slothful. Yet he pleased the ear,
And with persuasive accent thus began :—

“ I should be much for open war, O Peers,
As not behind in hate, if what was urged 120
Main reason to persuade immediate war
Did not dissuade me most and seem to cast
Ominous conjecture on the whole success ;
When he who most excels in fact of arms,
In what he counsels and in what excels
Mistrustful, grounds his courage on despair
And utter dissolution, as the scope
Of all his aim, after some dire revenge.
First, what revenge? The towers of Heaven are filled
With armèd watch, that render all access 130
Impregnable : oft on the bordering Deep
Encamp their legions, or with obscure wing
Scout far and wide into the realm of Night,
Scorning surprise. Or, could we break our way
By force, and at our heels all Hell should rise
With blackest insurrection to confound
Heaven’s purest light, yet our great Enemy,
All incorruptible, would on his throne
Sit unpolluted, and the ethereal mould,
Incapable of stain, would soon expel 140
Her mischief, and purge off the baser fire,
Victorious. Thus repulsed, our final hope
Is flat despair : we must exasperate
The Almighty Victor to spend all his rage ;
And that must end us ; that must be our cure—
To be no more. Sad cure ! for who would lose,
Though full of pain, this intellectual being,
Those thoughts that wander through eternity,
To perish rather, swallowed up and lost
In the wide womb of uncreated Night, 150
Devoid of sense and motion ? And who knows,
Let this be good, whether our angry Foe
Can give it, or will ever ? How he can

Is doubtful ; that he never will is sure.
Will He, so wise, let loose at once his ire,
Belike through impotence or unaware,
To give his enemies their wish, and end
Them in his anger whom his anger saves
To punish endless ? 'Wherefore cease we, then ?'
Say they who counsel war ; 'we are decreed, 160
Reserved, and destined to eternal woe ;
Whatever doing, what can we suffer more,
What can we suffer worse ?' Is this, then, worst—
Thus sitting, thus consulting, thus in arms ?
What when we fled amain, pursued and strook
With Heaven's afflicting thunder, and besought
The Deep to shelter us ? This Hell then seemed
A refuge from those wounds. Or when we lay
Chained on the burning lake ? That sure was worse.
What if the breath that kindled those grim fires, 170
Awaked, should blow them into sevenfold rage,
And plunge us in the flames ; or from above
Should intermitted vengeance arm again
His red right hand to plague us ? What if all
Her stores were opened, and this firmament
Of Hell should spout her cataracts of fire,
Impending horrors, threatening hideous fall
One day upon our heads ; while we perhaps,
Designing or exhorting glorious war,
Caught in a fiery tempest, shall be hurled, 180
Each on his rock transfixed, the sport and prey
Of racking whirlwinds, or for ever sunk
Under yon boiling ocean, wrapt in chains,
There to converse with everlasting groans,
Unrespited, unpitied, unreprieved,
Ages of hopeless end ? This would be worse.
War, therefore, open or concealed, alike
My voice dissuades ; for what can force or guile

With Him, or who deceive His mind, whose eye
Views all things at one view? He from Heaven's highth
All these our motions vain sees and derides, 191
Not more almighty to resist our might
Than wise to frustrate all our plots and wiles.
Shall we, then, live thus vile—the race of Heaven
Thus trampled, thus expelled, to suffer here
Chains and these torments? Better these than worse,
By my advice; since fate inevitable
Subdues us, and omnipotent decree,
The Victor's will. To suffer, as to do,
Our strength is equal; nor the law unjust 200
That so ordains. This was at first resolved,
If we were wise, against so great a foe
Contending, and so doubtful what might fall.
I laugh when those who at the spear are bold
And venturous, if that fail them, shrink, and fear
What yet they know must follow,—to endure
Exile, or ignominy, or bonds, or pain,
The sentence of their conqueror. This is now
Our doom; which if we can sustain and bear,
Our Supreme Foe in time may much remit 210
His anger, and perhaps, thus far removed,
Not mind us not offending, satisfied
With what is punished; whence these raging fires
Will slacken, if his breath stir not their flames.
Our purer essence then will overcome
Their noxious vapour; or, inured, not feel;
Or, changed at length, and to the place conformed
In temper and in nature, will receive
Familiar the fierce heat; and, void of pain,
This horror will grow mild, this darkness light; 220
Besides what hope the never-ending flight
Of future days may bring, what chance, what change
Worth waiting,—since our present lot appears

For happy though but ill, for ill not worst,
If we procure not to ourselves more woe."

Thus Belial, with words clothed in reason's garb,
Counselled ignoble ease and peaceful sloth,
Not peace ; and after him thus Mammon spake :—

" Either to disenthroned the King of Heaven
We war, if war be best, or to regain 230
Our own right lost. Him to unthroned we then
May hope, when everlasting Fate shall yield
To fickle Chance, and Chaos judge the strife.
The former, vain to hope, argues as vain
The latter ; for what place can be for us
Within Heaven's bound, unless Heaven's Lord Supreme
We overpower ? Suppose he should relent,
And publish grace to all, on promise made
Of new subjection ; with what eyes could we
Stand in his presence humble, and receive 240
Strict laws imposed, to celebrate his throne
With warbled hymns, and to his Godhead sing
Forced Halleluiahs, while he lordly sits
Our envied sovrán, and his altar breathes
Ambrosial odours and ambrosial flowers,
Our servile offerings ? This must be our task
In Heaven, this our delight. How wearisome
Eternity so spent in worship paid
To whom we hate ! Let us not then pursue,
By force impossible, by leave obtained 250
Unacceptable, though in Heaven, our state
Of splendid vassalage ; but rather seek
Our own good from ourselves, and from our own
Live to ourselves, though in this vast recess,
Free and to none accountable, preferring
Hard liberty before the easy yoke
Of servile pomp. Our greatness will appear
Then most conspicuous when great things of small,

Useful of hurtful, prosperous of adverse,
We can create, and in what place soe'er 260
Thrive under evil, and work ease out of pain
Through labour and endurance. This deep world
Of darkness do we dread? How oft amidst
Thick clouds and dark doth Heaven's all-ruling Sire
Choose to reside, his glory unobscured,
And with the majesty of darkness round
Covers his throne, from whence deep thunders roar,
Mustering their rage, and Heaven resembles Hell!
As He our darkness, cannot we His light
Imitate when we please? This desert soil 270
Wants not her hidden lustre, gems and gold;
Nor want we skill or art from whence to raise
Magnificence; and what can Heaven show more?
Our torments also may, in length of time,
Become our elements, these piercing fires
As soft as now severe, our temper changed
Into their temper; which must needs remove
The sensible of pain. All things invite
To peaceful counsels, and the settled state
Of order, how in safety best we may 280
Compose our present evils, with regard
Of what we are and where, dismissing quite
All thoughts of war. Ye have what I advise."

He scarce had finished, when such murmur filled
The assembly as when hollow rocks retain
The sound of blustering winds, which all night long
Had roused the sea, now with hoarse cadence lull
Seafaring men o'erwatched, whose bark by chance,
Or pinnace, anchors in a craggy bay
After the tempest. Such applause was heard 290
As Mammon ended, and his sentence pleased,
Advising peace: for such another field
They dreaded worse than Hell; so much ~~th~~ fear

Of thunder and the sword of Michael
Wrought still within them ; and no less desire
To found this nether empire, which might rise,
By policy and long process of time,
In emulation opposite to Heaven.
Which when Beelzebub perceived—than whom,
Satan except, none higher sat—with grave 300
Aspect he rose, and in his rising seemed
A pillar of state. Deep on his front engraven
Deliberation sat, and public care ;
And princely counsel in his face yet shone,
Majestic, though in ruin. Sage he stood,
With Atlantean shoulders, fit to bear
The weight of mightiest monarchies ; his look
Drew audience and attention still as night
Or summer's noontide air, while thus he spake :—

“ Thrones and Imperial Powers, Offspring of Heaven,
Ethereal Virtues ! or these titles now 311
Must we renounce, and, changing style, be called
Princes of Hell ? for so the popular vote
Inclines—here to continue, and build up here
A growing empire ; doubtless ! while we dream,
And know not that the King of Heaven hath doomed
This place our dungeon—not our safe retreat
Beyond his potent arm, to live exempt
From Heaven's high jurisdiction, in new league
Banded against his throne, but to remain 320
In strictest bondage, though thus far removed,
Under the inevitable curb, reserved
His captive multitude. For He, be sure,
In highth or depth, still first and last will reign
Sole king, and of his kingdom lose no part
By our revolt, but over Hell extend
His empire, and with iron sceptre rule
Us ~~like~~ as with his golden those in Heaven.

What sit we then projecting peace and war ?
War hath determined us and foiled with loss 330
Irreparable ; terms of peace yet none
Voutsafed or sought ; for what peace will be given
To us enslaved, but custody severe,
And stripes and arbitrary punishment
Inflicted ? and what peace can we return,
But, to our power, hostility and hate,
Untamed reluctance, and revenge, though slow,
Yet ever plotting how the Conqueror least
May reap his conquest, and may least rejoice
In doing what we most in suffering feel ? 340
Nor will occasion want, nor shall we need
With dangerous expedition to invade
Heaven, whose high walls fear no assault or siege,
Or ambush from the Deep. What if we find
Some easier enterprise ? There is a place
(If ancient and prophetic fame in Heaven
Err not)—another World, the happy seat
Of some new race, called Man, about this time
To be created like to us, though less
In power and excellence, but favoured more 350
Of Him who rules above ; so was His will
Pronounced among the gods, and by an oath
That shook Heaven's whole circumference confirmed.
Thither let us bend all our thoughts, to learn
What creatures there inhabit, of what mould
Or substance, how endued, and what their power
And where their weakness : how attempted best,
By force or subtlety. Though Heaven be shut,
And Heaven's high Arbitrator sit secure
In his own strength, this place may lie exposed, 360
The utmost border of his kingdom, left
To their defence who hold it : here, perhaps,
Some advantageous act may be achieved

By sudden onset—either with Hell-fire
To waste his whole creation, or possess
All as our own, and drive, as we are driven,
The puny habitants ; or, if not drive,
Seduce them to our party, that their God
May prove their foe, and with repenting hand
Abolish his own works. This would surpass 370
Common revenge, and interrupt His joy
In our confusion, and our joy upraise
In His disturbance ; when his darling sons,
Hurled headlong to partake with us, shall curse
Their frail original, and faded bliss—
Faded so soon ! Advise if this be worth
Attempting, or to sit in darkness here
Hatching vain empires.” Thus Beelzebub
Pleaded his devilish counsel—first devised
By Satan, and in part proposed : for whence, 380
But from the author of all ill, could spring
So deep a malice, to confound the race
Of mankind in one root, and Earth with Hell
To mingle and involve, done all to spite
The great Creator ? But their spite still serves
His glory to augment. The bold design
Pleased highly those Infernal States, and joy
Sparkled in all their eyes : with full assent
They vote : whereat his speech he thus renews :—
“ Well have ye judged, well ended long debate, 390
Synod of Gods, and, like to what ye are,
Great things resolved, which from the lowest deep
Will once more lift us up, in spite of fate,
Nearer our ancient seat—perhaps in view
Of those bright confines, whence, with neighbouring arms,
And opportune excursion, we may chance
Re-enter Heaven ; or else in some mild zone
Dwell, not unvisited of Heaven's fair light,

Secure, and at the brightening orient beam
 Purge off this gloom : the soft delicious air, 400
 To heal the scar of these corrosive fires,
 Shall breathe her balm. But, first, whom shall we send
 In search of this new World? whom shall we find
 Sufficient? who shall tempt with wandering feet
 The dark, unbottomed, infinite Abyss,
 And through the palpable obscure find out
 His uncouth way, or spread his acry flight,
 Upborne with indefatigable wings
 Over the vast Abrupt, ere he arrive
 The happy Isle! What strength, what art, can then
 Suffice, or what evasion bear him safe 411
 Through the strict senteries and stations thick
 Of Angels watching round? Here he had need
 All circumspection: and we now no less
 Choice in our suffrage; for on whom we send
 The weight of all, and our last hope, relies." ✓

This said, he sat; and expectation held
 His look suspense, awaiting who appeared
 To second, or oppose, or undertake
 The perilous attempt. But all sat mute, 420
 Pondering the danger with deep thoughts; and each
 In other's countenance read his own dismay,
 Astonished. None among the choice and prime
 Of those Heaven-warring champions could be found
 So hardy as to proffer or accept,
 Alone, the dreadful voyage; till, at last,
 Satan, whom now transcendent glory raised
 Above his fellows, with monarchal pride
 Conscious of highest worth, unmoved thus spake:

"O Progeny of Heaven! Empyrean Thrones!
 With reason hath deep silence and demur
 Seized us, though in "

Our prison strong, this huge convex of fire,
Outrageous to devour, immures us round
Ninefold ; and gates of burning adamant,
Barred over us, prohibit all egress.
These passed, if any pass, the void profound
Of unessential Night receives him next,
Wide-gaping, and with utter loss of being 440
Threatens him, plunged in that abortive gulf.
If thence he scape, into whatever world,
Or unknown region, what remains him less
Than unknown dangers, and as hard escape?
But I should ill become this throne, O Peers,
And this imperial sovranty, adorned
With splendour, armed with power, if aught proposed
And judged of public moment, in the shape
Of difficulty or danger, could deter
Me from attempting. Wherefore do I assume 450
These royalties, and not refuse to reign,
Refusing to accept as great a share
Of hazard as of honour, due alike
To him who reigns, and so much to him due
Of hazard more as he above the rest
High honoured sits? Go, therefore, mighty Powers,
Terror of Heaven, though fallen ; intend at home,
While here shall be our home, what best may ease
The present misery, and render Hell
More tolerable ; if there be cure or charm 460
To respite, or deceive, or slack the pain
Of this ill mansion : intermit no watch
Against a wakeful foe, while I abroad
Through all the coasts of dark destruction seek
Deliverance for us all. This enterprise
None shall partake with me. Thus saying, rose
d all reply ;

Others among the chief might offer now,
Certain to be refused, what erst they feared, 470
And, so refused, might in opinion stand
His rivals, winning cheap the high repute
Which he through hazard huge must earn. But they
Dreaded not more the adventure than his voice
Forbidding ; and at once with him they rose.
Their rising all at once was as the sound
Of thunder heard remote. Towards him they bend
With awful reverence prone, and as a God
Extol him equal to the Highest in Heaven.
Nor failed they to express how much they praised 480
That for the general safety he despised
His own : for neither do the Spirits damned
Lose all their virtue ; lest bad men should boast
Their specious deeds on earth, which glory excites,
Or close ambition varnished o'er with zeal.

Thus they their doubtful consultations dark
Ended, rejoicing in their matchless Chief :
As, when from mountain-tops the dusky clouds
Ascending, while the North-wind sleeps, o'erspread
Heaven's cheerful face, the louring element 490
Scowls o'er the darkened landskip snow or shower,
If chance the radiant sun, with farewell sweet,
Extend his evening beam, the fields revive,
The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds
Attest their joy, that hill and valley rings.
O shame to men ! (Devil with devil damned
Firm concord holds ; men only disagree
Of creatures rational, though under hope
Of heavenly grace, and, God proclaiming pe
Yet live in hatred, enmity, and strife
Among themselves, and levy cruel wars,
Wasting the earth, each other to destroy :
As if (which might induce us to accord)

Man had not hellish foes enow besides,
That day and night for his destruction wait!

The Stygian Council thus dissolved ; and forth
In order came the grand Infernal Peers :
Midst came their mighty Paramount, and seemed
Alone the antagonist of Heaven, nor less
Than Hell's dread Emperor, with pomp supreme, 510
And god-like imitated state : him round
A globe of fiery Seraphim enclosed
With bright emblazonry and horrent arms.
Then of their session ended they bid cry
With trumpet's regal sound the great result :
Toward the four winds four speedy Cherubim
Put to their mouths the sounding alchymy,
By harald's voice explained ; the hollow Abyss
Heard far and wide, and all the host of Hell
With deafening shout returned them loud acclaim. 520
Thence more at ease their minds, and somewhat raised
By false presumptuous hope, the rang'd Powers
Disband ; and, wandering, each his several way
Pursues, as inclination or sad choice
Leads him perplexed, where he may likeliest find
Truce to his restless thoughts, and entertain
The irksome hours, till his great Chief return.
Part on the plain, or in the air sublime,
Upon the wing or in swift race contend,
As at the Olympian games or Pythian fields ; 530
Part curb their fiery steeds, or shun the goal
With rapid wheels, or fronted brigads form :
When, to warn proud cities, war appears
In the troubled sky, and armies rush
Tole in the clouds ; before each van
With the aery knights, and couch their spears,
Thickest legions close ; with feats of arms
Her end of heaven the welkin burns.

Others, with vast Typhœan rage, more fell,
Rend up both rocks and hills, and ride the air 540
In whirlwind ; Hell scarce holds the wild uproar :
As when Alcides, from Œchalia crowned
With conquest, felt the envenomed robe, and tore
Through pain up by the roots Thessalian pines,
And Lichas from the top of Œta threw
Into the Euboic sea. Others, more mild,
Retreated in a silent valley, sing
With notes angelical to many a harp
Their own heroic deeds, and hapless fall
By doom of battle, and complain that Fate 550
Free Virtue should enthrall to Force or Chance.
Their song was partial ; but the harmony
(What could it less when Spirits immortal sing ?)
Suspended Hell, and took with ravishment
The thronging audience. In discourse more sweet
(For Eloquence the Soul, Song charms the Sense)
Others apart sat on a hill retired,
In thoughts more elevate, and reasoned high
Of Providence, Foreknowledge, Will, and Fate —
Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute— 560
And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.
Of good and evil much they argued then,
Of happiness and final misery,
Passion and apathy, and glory and shame :
Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy !—
Yet, with a pleasing sorcery, could charm
Pain for a while or anguish, and excite
Fallacious hope, or arm the obdurèd breast
With stubborn patience as with triple steel.
Another part, in squadrons and gross bands, 570
On bold adventure to discover wide
That dismal world, if any clime perhaps
Might yield them easier habitation, bend

Four ways their flying march, along the banks
Of four infernal rivers, that disgorge
Into the burning lake their baleful streams—
Abhorred Styx, the flood of deadly hate ,
Sad Acheron of sorrow, black and deep ;
Cocytus, named of lamentation loud
Heard on the rueful stream ; fierce Phlegeton, 580
Whose waves of torrent fire inflame with rage.
Far off from these, a slow and silent stream,
Lethe, the river of oblivion, rolls
Her watery labyrinth, whereof who drinks
Forthwith his former state and being forgets—
Forgets both joy and grief, pleasure and pain.
Beyond this flood a frozen continent
Lies dark and wild, beat with perpetual storms
Of whirlwind and dire hail, which on firm land
Thaws not, but gathers heap, and ruin seems 590
Of ancient pile ; all else deep snow and ice,
A gulf profound as that Serbonian bog
Betwixt Damiata and Mount Casius old,
Where armies whole have sunk : the parching air
Burns froze, and cold performs the effect of fire.
Thither, by harpy-footed Furies haled,
At certain revolutions all the damned
Are brought ; and feel by turns the bitter change
Of fierce extremes, extremes by change more fierce,
From beds of raging fire to starve in ice 600
Their soft ethereal warmth, and there to pine,
Immovable, infixed, and frozen round
Periods of time,—thence hurried back to fire.
They ferry over this Lethean sound
Both to and fro, their sorrow to augment,
And wish and struggle, as they pass, to reach
The tempting stream, with one small drop to lose
In sweet forgetfulness all pain and woe,

All in one moment, and so near the brink ;
But Fate withstands, and, to oppose the attempt, 610
Medusa with Gorgonian terror guards
The ford, and of itself the water flies
All taste of living wight, as once it fled
The lip of Tantalus. Thus roving on
In confused march forlorn, the adventurous bands,
With shuddering horror pale, and eyes aghast,
Viewed first their lamentable lot, and found
No rest. Through many a dark and dreary vale
They passed, and many a region dolorous,
O'er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp, 620
Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of
death—

A universe of death, which God by curse
Created evil, for evil only good ;
Where all life dies, death lives, and Nature breeds,
Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things,
Abominable, inutterable, and worse
Than fables yet have feigned or fear conceived,
Gorgons, and Hydras, and Chimæras dire.

Meanwhile the Adversary of God and Man,
Satan, with thoughts inflamed of highest design, 630
Puts on swift wings, and toward the gates of Hell
Explores his solitary flight : sometimes
He scours the right hand coast, sometimes the left ;
Now shaves with level wing the deep, then soars
Up to the fiery concave towering high.
As when far off at sea a fleet descried
Hangs in the clouds, by equinoctial winds
Close sailing from Bengala, or the isles
Of Ternate and Tidore, whence merchants bring
Their spicy drugs ; they on the trading flood, 640
Through the wide Ethiopian to the Cape,
Ply stemming nightly toward the pole : so seemed

Far off the flying Fiend. At last appear
Hell-bounds, high reaching to the horrid roof,
And thrice threefold the gates ; three folds were brass,
Three iron, three of adamantine rock,
Impenetrable, impaled with circling fire,
Yet unconsumed. Before the gates there sat
On either side a formidable Shape.
The one seemed woman to the waist, and fair, 650
But ended foul in many a scaly fold,
Voluminous and vast—a serpent armed
With mortal sting. About her middle round
A cry of Hell-hounds never-ceasing barked
With wide Cerberean mouths full loud, and rung
A hideous peal ; yet, when they list, would creep,
If aught disturbed their noise, into her womb,
And kennel there ; yet there still barked and howled
Within unseen. Far less abhorred than these
Vexed Scylla, bathing in the sea that parts 660
Calabria from the hoarse Trinacrian shore ;
Nor uglier follow the night-hag, when, called
In secret, riding through the air she comes,
Lured with the smell of infant blood, to dance
With Lapland witches, while the labouring moon
Eclipses at their charms. The other Shape—
If shape it might be called that shape had none
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb ;
Or substance might be called that shadow seemed,
For each seemed either—black it stood as Night, 670
Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as Hell,
And shook a dreadful dart : what seemed his head
The likeness of a kingly crown had on.
Satan was now at hand, and from his seat
The monster moving onward came as fast
With horrid strides ; Hell trembled as he strode.
The undaunted Fiend what this might be admired—

Admired, not feared (God and his Son except,
Created thing naught valued he nor shunned),
And with disdainful look thus first began :— 680

“ Whence and what art thou, execrable Shape,
That dar’st, though grim and terrible, advance
Thy miscreated front athwart my way
To yonder gates? Through them I mean to pass,
That be assured, without leave asked of thee
Retire; or taste thy folly, and learn by proof,
Hell-born, not to contend with Spirits of Heaven.”

To whom the Goblin, full of wrath, replied :—
“ Art thou that Traitor-Angel, art thou he,
Who first broke peace in Heaven and faith, till then 690
Unbroken, and in proud rebellious arms
Drew after him the third part of Heaven’s sons,
Conjured against the Highest—for which both thou
And they, outcast from God, are here condemned
To waste eternal days in woe and pain?
And reckon’st thou thyself with Spirits of Heaven,
Hell-doomed, and breath’st defiance here and scorn,
Where I reign king, and, to enrage thee more,
Thy king and lord? Back to thy punishment,
False fugitive; and to thy speed add wings, 700
Lest with a whip of scorpions I pursue
Thy lingering, or with one stroke of this dart
Strange horror seize thee, and pangs unfelt before.”

So spake the grisly Terror, and in shape,
So speaking and so threatening, grew tenfold
More dreadful and deform. On the other side,
Incensed with indignation, Satan stood
Unterrified, and like a comet burned,
That fires the length of Ophiuchus huge
In the arctic sky, and from his horrid hair 710
Shakes pestilence and war. Each at the head
Levelled his deadly aim; their fatal hands

No second stroke intend ; and such a frown
Each cast at the other as when two black clouds,
With Heaven's artillery fraught, come rattling on
Over the Caspian—then stand front to front,
Hovering a space, till winds the signal blow
To join their dark encounter in mid-air.
So frowned the mighty combatants that Hell
Grew darker at their frown ; so matched they stood ;
For never but once more was either like 721
To meet so great a foe. And now great deeds
Had been achieved, whereof all Hell had rung,
Had not the snaky sorceress, that sat
Fast by Hell-gate and kept the fatal key,
Risen, and with hideous outcry rushed between.

“ O father, what intends thy hand,” she cried,
“ Against thy only son ? What fury, O son,
Possesses thee to bend that mortal dart
Against thy father's head ? And know'st for whom !
For Him who sits above, and laughs the while 731
At thee, ordained his drudge to execute
Whate'er his wrath, which He calls justice, bids—
His wrath, which one day will destroy ye both !”

She spake, and at her words the hellish Pest
Forbore : then these to her Satan returned :—

“ So strange thy outcry, and thy words so strange
Thou interposest, that my sudden hand,
Prevented, spares to tell thee yet by deeds
What it intends, till first I know of thee 740
What thing thou art, thus double-formed, and why,
In this infernal vale first met, thou call'st
Me father, and that phantasm call'st my son.
I know thee not, nor ever saw till now
Sight more detestable than him and thee.”

To whom thus the Portress of Hell-gate replied :—
“ Hast thou forgot me, then ; and do I seem

Now in thine eye so foul?—once deemed so fair
In Heaven, when at the assembly, and in sight
Of all the Seraphim with thee combined 750
In bold conspiracy against Heaven's King,
All on a sudden miserable pain
Surprised thee, dim thine eyes, and dizzy swum
In darkness, while thy head flames thick and fast
Threw forth, till on the left side opening wide,
Likest to thee in shape, and countenance bright,
Then shining heavenly fair, a goddess armed,
Out of thy head I sprung. Amazement seized
All the host of Heaven ; back they recoiled afraid
At first, and called me *Sin*, and for a sign 760
Portentous held me ; but, familiar grown,
I pleased, and with attractive graces won
The most averse—thee chiefly, who, full oft
Thyself in me thy perfect image viewing,
Becam'st enamoured ; and such joy thou took'st
With me in secret that my womb conceived
A growing burden. Meanwhile war arose,
And fields were fought in Heaven : wherein remained
(For what could else ?) to our Almighty Foe
Clear victory ; to our part loss and rout 770
Through all the Empyrean. Down they fell,
Driven headlong from the pitch of Heaven, down
Into this Deep ; and in the general fall
I also : at which time this powerful key
Into my hands was given, with charge to keep
These gates for ever shut, which none can pass
Without my opening. Pensive here I sat
Alone ; but long I sat not, till my womb,
Pregnant by thee, and now excessive grown,
Prodigious motion felt and rueful throcs. 780
At last this odious offspring whom thou scest,
Thine own begotten, breaking violent way,

Tore through my entrails, that, with fear and pain
Distorted, all my nether shape thus grew
Transformed : but he my inbred enemy
Forth issued, brandishing his fatal dart,
Made to destroy. I fled, and cried out *Death !*
Hell trembled at the hideous name, and sighed
From all her caves, and back resounded *Death !*
I fled ; but he pursued (though more, it seems, 790
Inflamed with lust than rage), and, swifter far,
Me overtook, his mother, all dismayed,
And, in embraces forcible and foul
Engendering with me, of that rape begot
These yelling monsters, that with ceaseless cry
Surround me, as thou saw'st—hourly conceived
And hourly born, with sorrow infinite
To me : for, when they list, into the womb
That bred them they return, and howl, and gnaw
My bowels, their repast ; then, bursting forth 800
Afresh, with conscious terrors vex me round,
That rest or intermission none I find.
Before mine eyes in opposition sits
Grim Death, my son and foe, who sets them on,
And me, his parent, would full soon devour
For want of other prey, but that he knows
His end with mine involved, and knows that I
Should prove a bitter morsel, and his bane,
Whenever that shall be : so Fate pronounced.
But thou, O father, I forewarn thee, shun 810
His deadly arrow ; neither vainly hope
To be invulnerable in those bright arms,
Though tempered heavenly ; for that mortal dint,
Save He who reigns above, none can resist."

She finished ; and the subtle Fiend his lore
Soon learned, now milder, and thus answered smooth :—

" Dear daughter—since thou claim'st me for thy sire,

And my fair son here show'st me, the dear pledge
Of dalliance had with thee in Heaven, and joys
Then sweet, now sad to mention, through dire change
Befallen us unforeseen, unthought-of,—know, 821
I come no enemy, but to set free
From out this dark and dismal house of pain
Both him and thee, and all the Heavenly host
Of Spirits that, in our just pretences armed,
Fell with us from on high. From them I go
This uncouth errand sole, and one for all
Myself expose, with lonely steps to tread
The unfounded Deep, and through the void immense
To search, with wandering quest, a place foretold 830
Should be—and, by concurring signs, ere now
Created vast and round,—a place of bliss
In the purlieus of Heaven ; and therein placed
A race of upstart creatures, to supply
Perhaps our vacant room, though more removed,
Lest Heaven, surcharged with potent multitude,
Might hap to move new broils. Be this, or aught
Than this more secret, now designed, I haste
To know ; and, this once known, shall soon return,
And bring ye to the place where thou and Death 840
Shall dwell at ease, and up and down unseen
Wing silently the buxom air, embalmed
With odours. There ye shall be fed and filled
Immeasurably ; all things shall be your prey."

He ceased ; for both seemed highly pleased, and Death
Grinned horrible a ghastly smile, to hear
His famine should be filled, and blessed his maw
Destined to that good hour. No less rejoiced
His mother bad, and thus bespake her sire :—

" The key of this infernal Pit, by due 850
And by command of Heaven's all-powerful King,
I keep, by Him forbidden to unlock

These adamantine gates ; against all force
Death ready stands to interpose his dart,
Fearless to be o'ermatched by living might.
But what owe I to His commands above,
Who hates me, and hath hither thrust me down
Into this gloom of Tartarus profound,
To sit in hateful office here confined,
Inhabitant of Heaven and heavenly-born— 860
Here in perpetual agony and pain,
With terrors and with clamours compassed round
Of mine own brood, that on my bowels feed ?
Thou art my father, thou my author, thou
My being gav'st me ; whom should I obey
But thee ? whom follow ? Thou wilt bring me soon
To that new world of light and bliss, among
The gods who live at ease, where I shall reign
At thy right hand voluptuous, as beseems
Thy daughter and thy darling, without end." 870

Thus saying, from her side the fatal key,
Sad instrument of all our woe, she took ;
And, towards the gate rolling her bestial train,
Forthwith the huge portcullis high up-drew,
Which, but herself, not all the Stygian Powers
Could once have moved ; then in the key-hole turns
The intricate wards, and every bolt and bar
Of massy iron or solid rock with ease
Unfastens. On a sudden open fly, 880
With impetuous recoil and jarring sound,
The infernal doors, and on their hinges grate
Harsh thunder, that the lowest bottom shook
Of Erebus. She opened ; but to shut
Excelled her power : the gates wide open stood,
That with extended wings a bannered host,
Under spread ensigns marching, might pass through
With horse and chariots ranked in loose array ;

So wide they stood, and like a furnace-mouth
Cast forth redounding smoke and ruddy flame.
Before their eyes in sudden view appear 890
The secrets of the hoary Deep,—a dark
Illimitable ocean, without bound,
Without dimension ; where length, breadth, and highth,
And time, and place, are lost ; where eldest Night
And Chaos, ancestors of Nature, hold
Eternal anarchy, amidst the noise
Of endless wars, and by confusion stand.
For Hot, Cold, Moist, and Dry, four champions fierce,
Strive here for mastery, and to battle bring
Their embryon atoms : they around the flag 900
Of each his faction, in their several clans,
Light-armed or heavy, sharp, smooth, swift, or slow,
Swarm populous, unnumbered as the sands
Of Barca or Cyrene's torrid soil,
Levied to side with warring winds, and poise
Their lighter wings. To whom these most adhere
He rules a moment : Chaos umpire sits,
And by decision more embroils the fray
By which he reigns : next him, high arbiter,
Chance governs all. Into this wild Abyss, 910
The womb of Nature, and perhaps her grave,
Of neither Sea, nor Shore, nor Air, nor Fire,
But all these in their pregnant causes mixed
Confusedly, and which thus must ever fight,
Unless the Almighty Maker them ordain
His dark materials to create more worlds—
Into this wild Abyss the wary Fiend
Stood on the brink of Hell and looked a while,
Pondering his voyage ; for no narrow frith
He had to cross. Nor was his ear less pealed 920
With noises loud and ruinous (to compare
Great things with small) than when Bellona storms

With all her battering engines, bent to rase
Some capital city ; or less than if this frame
Of heaven were falling, and these elements
In mutiny had from her axle torn
The steadfast Earth. At last his sail-broad vans
He spreads for flight, and, in the surging smoke
Uplifted, spurns the ground ; thence many a league,
As in a cloudy chair, ascending rides 930
Audacious ; but, that seat soon failing, meets
A vast vacuity. All unawares,
Fluttering his pennons vain, plumb-down he drops
Ten thousand fathom deep, and to this hour
Down had been falling, had not, by ill chance,
The strong rebuff of some tumultuous cloud,
Instinct with fire and nitre, hurried him
As many miles aloft. That fury stayed —
Quenched in a boggy Syrtis, neither sea,
Nor good dry land—nigh foundered, on he fares, 940
Treading the crude consistence, half on foot,
Half flying ; behoves him now both oar and sail.
As when a gryphon through the wilderness
With wingèd course, o'er hill or moory dale,
Pursues the Arimaspiæ, who by stealth
Had from his wakeful custody purloined
The guarded gold ; so eagerly the Fiend
O'er bog or steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare,
With head, hands, wings, or feet, pursues his way,
And swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies. 950
At length a universal hubbub wild
Of stunning sounds, and voices all confused,
Borne through the hollow dark, assaults his ear
With loudest vehemence. Thither he plies
Undaunted, to meet there whatever Power
Or Spirit of the nethermost Abyss
Might in that noise reside, of whom to ask

Which way the nearest coast of darkness lies
Bordering on light ; when straight behold the throne
Of *Chaos*, and his dark pavilion spread 960
Wide on the wasteful Deep ! With him enthroned
Sat sable-vested *Night*, eldest of things,
The consort of his reign ; and by them stood
Orcus and Ades, and the dreaded name
Of Demogorgon ; Rumour next, and Chance,
And Tumult, and Confusion, all embroiled,
And Discord with a thousand various mouths.

To whom Satan, turning boldly, thus :—" Ye Powers
And Spirits of this nethermost Abyss,
Chaos and ancient Night, I come no spy 970
With purpose to explore or to disturb
The secrets of your realm ; but, by constraint
Wandering this darksome desert, as my way
Lies through your spacious empire up to light,
Alone and without guide, half lost, I seek
What readiest path leads where your gloomy bounds
Confine with Heaven ; or, if some other place,
From your dominion won, the *Ethereal King*
Possesses lately, thither to arrive
I travel this profound. Direct my course : 980
Directed, no mean recompense it brings
To your behoof, if I that region lost,
All usurpation thence expelled, reduce
To her original darkness and your sway
(Which is my present journey), and once more
Erect the standard there of ancient Night.
Yours be the advantage all, mine the revenge !"

Thus Satan ; and him thus the Anarch old,
With faltering speech and visage incomposed,
Answered :—" I know thee, stranger, who thou art—990
That mighty leading Angel, who of late
Made head against Heaven's King, though overthrown.

I saw and heard ; for such a numerous host
Fled not in silence through the frightened Deep,
With ruin upon ruin, rout on rout,
Confusion worse confounded , and Heaven-gates
Poured out by millions her victorious bands,
Pursuing. I upon my frontiers here
Keep residence ; if all I can will serve
That little which is left so to defend, 1000
Encroached on still through our intestine broils,
Weakening the sceptre of old Night : first, Hell,
Your dungeon, stretching far and wide beneath ;
Now lately Heaven and Earth, another world
Hung o'er my realm, linked in a golden chain
To that side Heaven from whence your legions fell !
If that way be your walk, you have not far ;
So much the nearer danger. Go, and speed ;
Havoc, and spoil, and ruin, are my gain."

He ceased ; and Satan staid not to reply, 1010
But, glad that now his sea should find a shore,
With fresh alacrity and force renewed
Springs upward, like a pyramid of fire,
Into the wild expanse, and through the shock
Of fighting elements, on all sides round
Environed, wins his way ; harder beset
And more endangered than when Argo passed
Through Bosphorus betwixt the justling rocks,
Or when Ulysses on the larboard shunned
Charybdis, and by the other whirlpool steered. 1020
So he with difficulty and labour hard
Moved on. With difficulty and labour he ;
But, he once passed, soon after, when Man fell,
Strange alteration ! Sin and Death amain,
Following his track (such was the will of Heaven),
Paved after him a broad and beaten way
Over the dark Abyss, whose boiling gulf

Tamely endured a bridge of wondrous length,
From Hell continued, reaching the utmost Orb
Of this frail World ; by which the Spirits perverse 1030
With easy intercourse pass to and fro
To tempt or punish mortals, except whom
God and good Angels guard by special grace.

But now at last the sacred influence
Of light appears, and from the walls of Heaven
Shoots far into the bosom of dim Night
A glimmering dawn. Here Nature first begins
Her farthest verge, and Chaos to retire,
As from her outmost works, a broken foe,
With tumult less and with less hostile din ; 1040
That Satan with less toil, and now with ease,
Wafts on the calmer wave by dubious light,
And, like a weather-beaten vessel, holds
Gladly the port, though shrouds and tackle torn ;
Or in the emptier waste, resembling air,
Weighs his spread wings, at leisure to behold
Far off the empyreal Heaven, extended wide
In circuit, undetermined square or round,
With opal towers and battlements adorned
Of living sapphire, once his native scat, 1050
And, fast by, hanging in a golden chain,
This pendent World, in bigness as a star
Of smallest magnitude close by the moon.
Thither, full fraught with mischievous revenge,
Accurst, and in a cursèd hour, he hies. ↓

THE END OF THE SECOND BOOK

PARADISE LOST

BOOK III

THE ARGUMENT

God, sitting on his throne, sees Satan flying towards this World, then newly created ; shows him to the Son, who sat at his right hand ; foretells the success of Satan in perverting mankind ; clears his own justice and wisdom from all imputation, having created Man free, and able enough to have withstood his Tempter ; yet declares his purpose of grace towards him, in regard he fell not of his own malice, as did Satan, but by him seduced. The Son of God renders praises to his Father for the manifestation of his gracious purpose towards Man : but God again declares that grace cannot be extended towards Man without the satisfaction of Divine Justice ; Man hath offended the majesty of God by aspiring to Godhead, and therefore, with all his progeny, devoted to death, must die, unless some one can be found sufficient to answer for his offence, and undergo his punishment. The Son of God freely offers himself a ransom for Man ; the Father accepts him, ordains his incarnation, pronounces his exaltation above all names in Heaven and Earth ; commands all the Angels to adore him. They obey, and, hymning to their harps in full quire, celebrate the Father and the Son. Meanwhile Satan alights upon the bare convex of this World's outermost orb ; where wandering he first finds a place since called the Limbo of Vanity ; what persons and things fly up thither : thence comes to the gate of Heaven, described ascending by stairs, and the waters above the firmament that flow about it. His passage thence to the orb of the Sun : he finds there Uriel, the regent of that orb, but first changes himself into the shape of a meaner Angel, and, pretending a zealous desire to behold the new Creation, and Man whom God had placed here, inquires of him the place of his habitation, and is directed : Alights first on Mount Niphates

HAIL, holy Light, offspring of Heaven first-born !
Or of the Eternal coeternal beam
May I express thee unblamed ? since God is light,
And never but in unapproachèd light

Dwelt from eternity—dwelt then in thee,
Bright effluence of bright essence increate !
Or hear'st thou rather pure Ethereal stream,
Whose fountain who shall tell ? Before the Sun,
Before the Heavens, thou wert, and at the voice
Of God, as with a mantle, didst invest 10
The rising World of waters dark and deep,
Won from the void and formless Infinite !
Thee I revisit now with bolder wing,
Escaped the Stygian Pool, though long detained
In that obscure sojourn, while in my flight,
Through utter and through middle Darkness borne,
With other notes than to the Orphean lyre
I sung of Chaos and eternal Night,
Taught by the Heavenly Muse to venture down
The dark descent, and up to re-ascend, 20
Though hard and rare. Thee I revisit safe,
And feel thy sovran vital lamp ; but thou
Revisit'st not these eyes, that roll in vain
To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn ;
So thick a drop serene hath quenched their orbs,
Or dim suffusion veiled. Yet not the more
Cease I to wander where the Muses haunt
Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill,
Smit with the love of sacred song ; but chief
Thee, Sion, and the flowery brooks beneath, 30
That wash thy hallowed feet, and warbling flow,
Nightly I visit : nor sometimes forget
Those other two equalled with me in fate,
So were I equalled with them in renown,
Blind Thamyras and blind Mæonides,
And Tiresias and Phineus, prophets old :
Then feed on thoughts that voluntary move
Harmonious numbers ; as the wakeful bird
Sings darkling, and, in shadiest covert hid,

Tunes her nocturnal note. Thus with the year 40
Seasons return, but not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;
But cloud instead and ever-during dark
Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men
Cut off, and, for the book of knowledge fair,
Presented with a universal blank
Of Nature's works, to me expunged and ras'd,
And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out. 50
So much the rather thou, Celestial Light,
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate; there plant eyes; all mist from thence
Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight.

Now had the Almighty Father from above,
From the pure Empyrean where He sits
High throned above all highth, bent down his eye,
His own works and their works at once to view:
About him all the Sanctities of Heaven 60
Stood thick as stars, and from his sight received
Beatitude past utterance; on his right
The radiant image of his glory sat,
His only Son. On Earth he first beheld
Our two first parents, yet the only two
Of mankind, in the Happy Garden placed,
Reaping immortal fruits of joy and love,
Uninterrupted joy, unrivalled love,
In blissful solitude. He then surveyed
Hell and the gulf between, and Satan there 70
Coasting the wall of Heaven on this side Night,
In the dun air sublime, and ready now
To stoop, with wearied wings and willing feet,
On the bare outside of this World, that seemed

Firm land imbosomed without firmament,
Uncertain which, in ocean or in air.
Him God beholding from his prospect high,
Wherein past, present, future, he beholds,
Thus to His only Son foreseeing spake :—

"Only-begotten Son, seest thou what rage
 Transports our Adversary? whom no bounds
 Prescribed, no bars of Hell, nor all the chains
 Heaped on him there, nor yet the main Abyss
 Wide interrupt, can hold; so bent he seems
 On desperate revenge, that shall redound
 Upon his own rebellious head. And now,
 Through all restraint broke loose, he wings his way
 Not far off Heaven, in the precincts of light,
 Directly towards the new-created World,
 And Man there placed, with purpose to assay
 If him by force he can destroy, or, worse,
 By some false guile pervert: And shall pervert,
 For Man will hearken to his glozing lies,
 And easily transgress the sole command,
 Sole pledge of his obedience: so will fall
 He and his faithless progeny. Whose fault?
 Whose but his own? Ingrate, he had of me
 All he could have; I made him just and right,
 Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.
 Such I created all the Ethereal Powers
 And Spirits, both them who stood and them who failed;
 Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell.
 Not free, what proof could they have given sincere
 Of true allegiance, constant faith, or love,
 Where only what they needs must do appeared,
 Not what they would? What praise could they receive,
 What pleasure I, from such obedience paid,
 When Will and Reason (Reason also is Choice),
 Useless and vain, of freedom both despoiled,

Made passive both, had served Necessity, 110
Not Me? They, therefore, as to right belonged
So were created, nor can justly accuse
Their Maker, or their making, or their fate,
As if predestination overruled
Their will, disposed by absolute decree
Or high foreknowledge. They themselves decreed
Their own revolt, not I. If I foreknew,
Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault,
Which had no less proved certain unforeknown.
So without least impulse or shadow of fate, 120
Or aught by me immutably foreseen,
They trespass, authors to themselves in all,
Both what they judge and what they choose; for so
I formed them free, and free they must remain
Till they enthrall themselves: I else must change
Their nature, and revoke the high decree
Unchangeable, eternal, which ordained
Their freedom; they themselves ordained their fall.
The first sort by their own suggestion fell,
Self-tempted, self-depraved; Man falls, deceived 130
By the other first: Man, therefore, shall find grace;
The other, none. In mercy and justice both,
Through Heaven and Earth, so shall my glory excel;
But mercy, first and last, shall brightest shine."

Thus while God spake ambrosial fragrance filled
All Heaven, and in the blessed Spirits elect
Sense of new joy ineffable diffused.
Beyond compare the Son of God was seen
Most glorious; in him all his Father shone
Substantially expressed; and in his face 140
Divine compassion visibly appeared,
Love without end, and without measure grace;
Which uttering, thus He to his Father spake:—

"O Father, gracious was that word which closed

Thy sovran sentence, that Man should find grace ,
For which both Heaven and Earth shall high extol
Thy praises, with the innumerable sound
Of hymns and sacred songs, wherewith thy throne
Encompassed shall resound thee ever blest.
For, should Man finally be lost—should Man, 150
Thy creature late so loved, thy youngest son,
Fall circumvented thus by fraud, though joined
With his own folly——! That be from thee far,
That far be from thee, Father, who art judge
Of all things made, and judgest only right !
Or shall the Adversary thus obtain
His end, and frustrate thine? shall he fulfil
His malice, and thy goodness bring to naught ;
Or proud return, though to his heavier doom,
Yet with revenge accomplished, and to Hell 160
Draw after him the whole race of mankind,
By him corrupted? Or wilt thou thyself
Abolish thy creation, and unmake,
For him, what for thy glory thou hast made?—
So should thy goodness and thy greatness both
Be questioned and blasphemed without defence.”

To whom the great Creator thus replied :—
“ O Son, in whom my soul hath chief delight,
Son of my bosom, Son who art alone
My word, my wisdom, and effectual might, 170
All hast thou spoken as my thoughts are, all
As my eternal purpose hath decreed.
Man shall not quite be lost, but saved who will ;
Yet not of will in him, but grace in me
Freely voutsafed. Once more I will renew
His lapsèd powers, though forfeit, and enthralled
By sin to foul exorbitant desires ;
Upheld by me, yet once more he shall stand
On even ground against his mortal foe,—

By me upheld, that he may know how frail 180
 His fallen condition is, and to me owe
 All his deliverance, and to none but me.
 Some I have chosen of peculiar grace,
 Elect above the rest ; so is my will :
 The rest shall hear me call, and oft be warned
 Their sinful state, and to appease betimes
 The incensèd Deity, while offered grace
 Invites ; for I will clear their senses dark
 What may suffice, and soften stony hearts
 To pray, repent, and bring obedience due. 190
 To prayer, repentance, and obedience due,
 Though but endeavoured with sincere intent,
 Mine ear shall not be slow, mine eye not shut.
 And I will place within them as a guide
 My umpire Conscience ; whom if they will hear,
 Light after light well used they shall attain,
 And to the end persisting safe arrive.
 This my long sufferance, and my day of grace,
 They who neglect and scorn shall never taste ;
 But hard be hardened, blind be blinded more, 200
 That they may stumble on, and deeper fall ,
 And none but such from mercy I exclude.
 But yet all is not done. Man disobeying,
 Disloyal, breaks his fealty, and sins
 Against the high supremacy of Heaven,
 Affecting Godhead, and, so losing all,
 To expiate his treason hath naught left,
 But, to destruction sacred and devote,
 He with his whole posterity must die ;—
 Die he or Justice must ; unless for him 210
 Some other, able, and as willing, pay
 The rigid satisfaction, death for death.
 Say, Heavenly Powers, where shall we find such love ?
 Which of ye will be mortal, to redeem

Man's mortal crime, and just, the unjust to save ?
Dwells in all Heaven charity so dear ?”

He asked, but all the Heavenly Quire stood mute,
And silence was in Heaven : on Man's behalf

Patron or intercessor none appeared—

Much less that durst upon his own head draw 220

The deadly forfeiture, and ransom set.

And now without redemption all mankind

Must have been lost, adjudged to Death and Hell

By doom severe, had not the Son of God,

In whom the fulness dwells of love divine,

His dearest mediation thus renewed :—

“ Father, thy word is passed, Man shall find grace ;

And shall Grace not find means, that finds her way,

The speediest of thy wingèd messengers,

To visit all thy creatures, and to all 230

Comes unprevented, unimplored, unsought ?

Happy for Man, so coming ! He her aid

Can never seek, once dead in sins and lost —

Atonement for himself, or offering meet,

Indebted and undone, hath none to bring.

Behold *me*, then : me for him, life for life,

I offer ; on me let thine anger fall ;

Account me Man : I for his sake will leave

Thy bosom, and this glory next to thee

Freely put off, and for him lastly die

Well pleased ; on me let Death wreak all his rage.

Under his gloomy power I shall not long

Lie vanquished. Thou hast given me to possess

Life in myself for ever ; by thee I live ;

Though now to Death I yield, and am his due,

All that of me can die, yet, that debt paid,

Thou wilt not leave me in the loathsome grave

His prey, nor suffer my unspotted soul

For ever with corruption there to dwell ;

But I shall rise victorious, and subdue 250
My vanquisher, spoiled of his vaunted spoil.
Death his death's wound shall then receive, and stoop
Inglorious, of his mortal sting disarmed ;
I through the ample air in triumph high
Shall lead Hell captive maugre Hell, and show
The powers of Darkness bound. Thou, at the sight
Pleased, out of Heaven shalt look down and smile,
While, by thee raised, I ruin all my foes—
Death last, and with his carcase glut the grave ;
Then, with the multitude of my redeemed, 260
Shall enter Heaven, long absent, and return,
Father, to see thy face, wherein no cloud
Of anger shall remain, but peace assured
And reconciliation : wrath shall be no more
Thenceforth, but in thy presence joy entire."

His words here ended ; but his meek aspect
Silent yet spake, and breathed immortal love
To mortal men, above which only shone
Filial obedience : as a sacrifice
Glad to be offered, he attends the will 270
Of his great Father. Admiration seized
All Heaven, what this might mean, and whither tend,
Wondering ; but soon the Almighty thus replied :-

" O thou in Heaven and Earth the only peace
Found out for mankind under wrath, O thou
My sole complacence ! well thou know'st how dear
To me are all my works ; nor Man the least,
Though last created, that for him I spare
Thee from my bosom and right hand, to save,
By losing thee a while, the whole race lost ! 280
Thou, therefore, whom thou only canst redeem,
Their nature also to thy nature join ;
And be thyself Man among men on Earth,
Made flesh, when time shall be, of virgin seed,

By wondrous birth ; be thou in Adam's room
The head of all mankind, though Adam's son.
As in him perish all men, so in thee,
As from a second root, shall be restored
As many as are restored ; without thee, none.
His crime makes guilty all his sons ; thy merit, 290
Imputed, shall absolve them who renounce
Their own both righteous and unrighteous deeds,
And live in thee transplanted, and from thee
Receive new life. So Man, as is most just,
Shall satisfy for Man, be judged and die,
And dying rise, and, rising, with him raise
His brethren, ransomed with his own dear life.
So Heavenly love shall outdo Hellish hate,
Giving to death, and dying to redeem,
So clearly to redeem what Hellish hate 300
So easily destroyed, and still destroys
In those who, when they may, accept not grace.
Nor shalt thou, by descending to assume
Man's nature, lessen or degrade thine own.
Because thou hast, though throned in highest bliss
Equal to God, and equally enjoying
God-like fruition, quitted all to save
A world from utter loss, and hast been found
By merit more than birthright Son of God,—
Found worthiest to be so by being good, 310
Far more than great or high ; because in thee
Love hath abounded more than glory abounds ;
Therefore thy humiliation shall exalt
With thee thy manhood also to this throne :
Here shalt thou sit incarnate, here shalt reign
Both God and Man, Son both of God and Man,
Anointed universal King. All power
I give thee ; reign for ever, and assume
Thy merits ; under thee, as Head Supreme,

Thrones, Princedoms, Powers, Dominions, I reduce: 320
All knees to thee shall bow of them that bide
In Heaven, or Earth, or, under Earth, in Hell.
When thou, attended gloriously from Heaven,
Shalt in the sky appear, and from thee send
The summoning Archangels to proclaim
Thy dread tribunal, forthwith from all winds
The living, and forthwith the cited dead
Of all past ages, to the general doom
Shall hasten; such a peal shall rouse their sleep.
Then, all thy Saints assembled, thou shalt judge 330
Bad men and Angels; they arraigned shall sink
Beneath thy sentence; Hell, her numbers full,
Thenceforth shall be for ever shut. Meanwhile
The World shall burn, and from her ashes spring
New Heaven and Earth, wherein the just shall dwell,
And, after all their tribulations long,
See golden days, fruitful of golden deeds,
With Joy and Love triumphing, and fair Truth.
Then thou thy regal sceptre shalt lay by;
For regal sceptre then no more shall need; 340
God shall be all in all. But, all ye Gods,
Adore him who, to compass all this, dies;
Adore the Son, and honour him as me."

No sooner had the Almighty ceased but—all
The multitude of Angels, with a shout
Loud as from numbers without number, sweet
As from blest voices, uttering joy—Heaven rung
With jubilee, and loud hosannas filled
The eternal regions. Lowly reverent
Towards either throne they bow, and to the ground 350
With solemn adoration down they cast
Their crowns, inwove with amarant and gold,—
Immortal amarant, a flower which once
In Paradise, fast by the Tree of Life,

Began to bloom, but, soon for Man's offence
 To Heaven removed where first it grew, there grows
 And flowers aloft, shading the Fount of Life,
 And where the River of Bliss through midst of Heaven
 Rolls o'er Elysian flowers her amber stream !
 With these, that never fade, the Spirits elect 360
 Bind their resplendent locks, inwreathed with beams.
 Now in loose garlands thick thrown off, the bright
 Pavement, that like a sea of jasper shone,
 Impurpled with celestial roses smiled.
 Then, crowned again, their golden harps they took—
 Harps ever tuned, that glittering by their side
 Like quivers hung ; and with preamble sweet
 Of charming symphony they introduce
 Their sacred song, and waken raptures high :
 No voice exempt, no voice but well could join 370
 Melodious part ; such concord is in Heaven.

 Thee, Father, first they sung, Omnipotent,
 Immutable, Immortal, Infinite,
 Eternal King ; thee, Author of all being,
 Fountain of light, thyself invisible
 Amidst the glorious brightness where thou sitt'st
 Throned inaccessible, but when thou shad'st
 The full blaze of thy beams, and through a cloud
 Drawn round about thee like a radiant shrine
 Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appear, 380
 Yet dazzle Heaven, that brightest Seraphim
 Approach not, but with both wings veil their eyes.
 Thee next they sang, of all creation first, .
 Begotten Son, Divine Similitude,
 In whose conspicuous countenance, without cloud
 Made visible, the Almighty Father shines,
 Whom else no creature can behold : on thee
 Impressed the effulgence of his glory abides ;
 Transfused on thee his ample Spirit rests.

He Heaven of Heavens, and all the Powers therein, 390
By thee created ; and by thee threw down
The aspiring Dominations. Thou that day
Thy Father's dreadful thunder didst not spare,
Nor stop thy flaming chariot-wheels, that shook
Heaven's everlasting frame, while o'er the necks
Thou drov'st of warring Angels disarrayed.
Back from pursuit, thy Powers with loud acclaim
Thee only extolled, Son of thy Father's might,
To execute fierce vengeance on his foes.
Not so on Man : him, through their malice fallen, 400
Father of mercy and grace, thou didst not doom
So strictly, but much more to pity incline.
No sooner did thy dear and only Son
Perceive thee purposed not to doom frail Man
So strictly, but much more to pity inclined,
He, to appease thy wrath, and end the strife
Of mercy and justice in thy face discerned,
Regardless of the bliss wherein he sat
Second to thee, offered himself to die
For Man's offence. O unexampled love ! 410
Love nowhere to be found less than Divine !
Hail, Son of God, Saviour of men ! Thy name
Shall be the copious matter of my song ;
Henceforth, and never shall my harp thy praise
Forget, nor from thy Father's praise disjoin !

Thus they in Heaven, above the Starry Sphere,
Their happy hours in joy and hymning spent.
Meanwhile, upon the firm opacous globe
Of this round World, whose first convex divides
The luminous inferior Orbs, enclosed 420
From Chaos and the inroad of Darkness old,
Satan alighted walks. A globe far off
It seemed ; now seems a boundless continent,
Dark, waste, and wild, under the frown of Night

Starless exposed, and ever-threatening storms
Of Chaos blustering round, inclement sky,
Save on that side which from the wall of Heaven,
Though distant far, some small reflection gains
Of glimmering air less vexed with tempest loud.
Here walked the Fiend at large in spacious field. 430
As when a vulture, on Imaus bred,
Whose snowy ridge the roving Tartar bounds,
Dislodging from a region scarce of prey,
To gorge the flesh of lambs or yeanling kids
On hills where flocks are fed, flies toward the springs
Of Ganges or Hydaspes, Indian streams,
But in his way lights on the barren plains
Of Sericana, where Chineses drive
With sails and wind their cany waggons light .
So, on this windy sea of land, the Fiend 440
Walked up and down alone, bent on his prey :
Alone, for other creature in this place,
Living or lifeless, to be found was none ;—
None yet ; but store hereafter from the Earth
Up hither like aerial vapours flew
Of all things transitory and vain, when sin
With vanity had filled the works of men—
Both all things vain, and all who in vain things
Built their fond hopes of glory or lasting fame,
Or happiness in this or the other life. 450
All who have their reward on earth, the fruits
Of painful superstition and blind zeal,
Naught seeking but the praise of men, here find
I't retribution, empty as their deeds ;
All the unaccomplished works of Nature's hand,
Abortive, monstrous, or unkindly mixed,
Dissolved on Earth, fleet hither, and in vain,
Till final dissolution, wander here - -
Not in the neighbouring Moon, as some have dreamed :

Those argent fields more likely habitants, 460
 Translated Saints, or middle Spirits, hold,
 Betwixt the angelical and human kind.
 Hither, of ill-joined sons and daughters born,
 First from the ancient world those Giants came,
 With many a vain exploit, though then renowned :
 The builders next of Babel on the plain
 Of Sennaar, and still with vain design
 New Babels, had they wherewithal, would build :
 Others came single ; he who, to be deemed
 A god, leaped fondly into Ætna flames, 470
 Empedocles ; and he who, to enjoy
 Plato's Elysium, leaped into the sea,
 Cleombrotus ; and many more, too long,
 Embryos and idiots, eremites and friars,
 White, black, and grey, with all their trumpery.
 Here pilgrims roam, that strayed so far to seek
 In Golgotha him dead who lives in Heaven ;
 And they who, to be sure of Paradise,
 Dying put on the weeds of Dominic,
 Or in Franciscan think to pass disguised. 480
 They pass the planets seven, and pass the fixed,
 And that crystalline sphere whose balance weighs
 The trepidation talked, and that first moved ;
 And now Saint Peter at Heaven's wicket seems
 To wait them with his keys, and now at foot
 Of Heaven's ascent they lift their feet, when, lo !
 A violent cross wind from either coast
 Blows them transverse, ten thousand leagues awry,
 Into the devious air. Then might ye see
 Cows, hoods, and habits, with their wearers, tost 490
 And fluttered into rags ; then reliques, beads,
 Indulgences, dispenses, pardons, bulls,
 The sport of winds : all these, upwhirled aloft,
 Fly o'er the backside of the World far off

Into a Limbo large and broad, since called
The Paradise of Fools ; to few unknown
Long after, now unpeopled and untrod.

All this dark globe the Fiend found as he passed ;
And long he wandered, till at last a gleam
Of dawning light turned thitherward in haste 500
His travelled steps. Far distant he descries,
Ascending by degrees magnificent
Up to the wall of Heaven, a structure high ;
At top whereof, but far more rich, appeared
The work as of a kingly palacc-gate,
With frontispiece of diamond and gold
Embellished ; thick with sparkling orient gems
The portal shone, inimitable on Earth
By model, or by shading pencil drawn.
The stairs were such as whereon Jacob saw 510
Angels ascending and descending, bands
Of guardians bright, when he from Esau fled
To Padan-Aram, in the field of Luz
Dreaming by night under the open sky,
And waking cried, *This is the gate of Heaven.*
Each stair mysteriously was meant, nor stood
There always, but drawn up to Heaven sometimes
Viewless ; and underneath a bright sea flowed
Of jasper, or of liquid pearl, whereon
Who after came from Earth sailing arrived 520
Wafted by Angels, or flew o'er the lake
Rapt in a chariot drawn by fiery steeds.
The stairs were then let down, whether to dare
The Fiend by easy ascent, or aggravate
His sad exclusion from the doors of bliss :
Direct against which opened from beneath,
Just o'er the blissful seat of Paradise,
A passage down to the Earth—a passage wide ;
Wider by far than that of after-times

Over Mount Sion, and, though that were large, 530
Over the Promised Land to God so dear,
By which, to visit oft those happy tribes,
On high behests his Angels to and fro
Passed frequent, and his eye with choice regard
From Paneas, the fount of Jordan's flood,
To Beersaba, where the Holy Land
Borders on Egypt and the Arabian shore.
So wide the opening seemed, where bounds were set
To darkness, such as bound the ocean wave.
Satan from hence, now on the lower stair, 540
That scaled by steps of gold to Heaven-gate,
Looks down with wonder at the sudden view
Of all this World at once. As when a scout,
Through dark and desert ways with peril gone
All night, at last by break of cheerful dawn
Obtains the brow of some high-climbing hill,
Which to his eye discovers unaware
The goodly prospect of some foreign land
First seen, or some renowned metropolis
With glistening spires and pinnacles adorned, 550
Which now the rising sun gilds with his beams ;
Such wonder seized, though after Heaven seen,
The Spirit malign, but much more envy seized,
At sight of all this World beheld so fair.
Round he surveys (and well might, where he stood
So high above the circling canopy
Of Night's extended shade) from eastern point
Of Libra to the fleecy star that bears
Andromeda far off Atlantic seas
Beyond the horizon ; then from pole to pole 560
He views in breadth,—and, without longer pause,
Down right into the World's first region throws
His flight precipitant, and winds with ease
Through the pure marble air his oblique way

Amongst innumerable stars, that shone
Stars distant, but nigh-hand seemed other worlds.
Or other worlds they seemed, or happy isles,
Like those Hesperian Gardens famed of old,
Fortunate fields, and groves, and flowery vales ;
Thrice happy isles ! But who dwelt happy there 570
He staid not to inquire : above them all
The golden Sun, in splendour likest Heaven,
Allured his eye. Thither his course he bends,
Through the calm firmament (but up or down,
By centre or eccentric, hard to tell,
Or longitude) where the great luminary,
Aloof the vulgar constellations thick,
That from his lordly eye keep distance due,
Dispenses light from far. They, as they move
Their starry dance in numbers that compute 580
Days, months, and years, towards his all-cheering lamp
Turn swift their various motions, or are turned
By his magnetic beam, that gently warms
The Universe, and to each inward part
With gentle penetration, though unseen,
Shoots invisible virtue even to the Deep ;
So wondrously was set his station bright.
There lands the Fiend, a spot like which perhaps
Astronomer in the Sun's lucent orb
Through his glazed optic tube yet never saw. 590
The place he found beyond expression bright,
Compared with aught on Earth, metal or stone—
Not all parts like, but all alike informed
With radiant light, as glowing iron with fire.
If metal, part seemed gold, part silver clear ;
If stone, carbuncle most or chrysolite,
Ruby or topaz, to the twelve that shone
In Aaron's breast-plate, and a stone besides,
Imagined rather oft than elsewhere seen—

That stone, or like to that, which here below 600
Philosophers in vain so long have sought ;
In vain, though by their powerful art they bind
Volatile Hermes, and call up unbound
In various shapes old Proteus from the sea,
Drained through a limbec to his native form.
What wonder then if fields and regions here
Breathe forth elixir pure, and rivers run
Potable gold, when, with one virtuous touch,
The arch-chemic Sun, so far from us remote,
Produces, with terrestrial humour mixed, 610
Here in the dark so many precious things
Of colour glorious and effect so rare ?
Here matter new to gaze the Devil met
Undazzled. Far and wide his eye commands ;
For sight no obstacle found here, nor shade,
But all sunshine, as when his beams at noon
Culminate from the equator, as they now
Shot upward still direct, whence no way round
Shadow from body opaque can fall ; and the air,
Nowhere so clear, sharpened his visual ray 620
To objects distant far, whereby he soon
Saw within ken a glorious Angel stand,
The same whom John saw also in the Sun.
His back was turned, but not his brightness hid ;
Of beaming sunny rays a golden tiar
Circled his head, nor less his locks behind
Illustrious on his shoulders fledged with wings
Lay waving round : on some great charge employed
He seemed, or fixed in cogitation deep.
Glad was the Spirit impure, as now in hope 630
To find who might direct his wandering flight
To Paradise, the happy seat of Man,
His journey's end, and our beginning woe.
But first he casts to change his proper shape,

Which else might work him danger or delay :
And now a stripling Cherub he appears,
Not of the prime, yet such as in his face
Youth smiled celestial, and to every limb
Suitable grace diffused ; so well he feigned.
Under a coronet his flowing hair 640
In curls on either cheek played ; wings he wore
Of many a coloured plume sprinkled with gold,
His habit fit for speed succinct, and held . . .
Before his decent steps a silver wand.
He drew not nigh unheard ; the Angel bright,
Ere he drew nigh, his radiant visage turned,
Admonished by his ear, and straight was known
The Archangel Uriel—one of the seven
Who in God's presence, nearest to his throne,
Stand ready at command, and are his eyes 650
That run through all the Heavens, or down to the Earth
Bear his swift errands over moist and dry,
O'er sea and land. Him Satan thus accosts :
" Uriel ! for thou of those seven Spirits that stand
In sight of God's high throne, gloriously bright,
The first art wont his great authentic will
Interpreter through highest Heaven to bring,
Where all his Sons thy embassy attend,
And here art likeliest by supreme decree
Like honour to obtain, and as his eye 660
To visit oft this new Creation round -
Unspeakable desire to see and know
All these his wondrous works, but chiefly Man,
His chief delight and favour, him for whom
All these his works so wondrous he ordained,
Hath brought me from the quires of Cherubim
Alone thus wandering. Brightest Seraph, tell
In which of all these shining orbs hath Man
His fixèd seat—or fixèd seat hath none,

But all these shining orbs his choice to dwell— 670
That I may find him, and with secret gaze
Or open admiration him behold
On whom the great Creator hath bestowed
Worlds, and on whom hath all these graces poured ;
That both in him and all things, as is meet,
The Universal Maker we may praise ;
Who justly hath driven out his rebel foes
To deepest Hell, and, to repair that loss,
Created this new happy race of Men
To serve him better : Wise are all his ways !” 680

So spake the false dissembler unperceived ;
For neither man nor angel can discern
Hypocrisy—the only evil that walks
Invisible, except to God alone,
By his permissive will, through Heaven and Earth ;
And oft, though Wisdom wake, Suspicion sleeps
At Wisdom's gate, and to Simplicity
Resigns her charge, while Goodness thinks no ill
Where no ill seems : which now for once beguiled
Uriel, though Regent of the Sun, and held 690
The sharpest-sighted Spirit of all in Heaven ;
Who to the fraudulent impostor foul,
In his uprightness, answer thus returned :—

“ Fair Angel, thy desire, which tends to know
The works of God, thereby to glorify
The great Work-master, leads to no excess
That reaches blame, but rather merits praise
The more it seems excess, that led thee hither
From thy empyreal mansion thus alone,
To witness with thine eyes what some perhaps, 700
Contented with report, hear only in Heaven :
For wonderful indeed are all his works,
Pleasant to know, and worthiest to be all
Had in remembrance always with delight !

But what created mind can comprehend
Their number, or the wisdom infinite
That brought them forth, but hid their causes deep?
I saw when, at his word, the formless mass,
This World's material mould, came to a heap ·
Confusion heard his voice, and wild Uproar 710
Stood ruled, stood vast Infinitude confined ;
Till, at his second bidding, Darkness fled,
Light shone, and order from disorder sprung.
Swift to their several quarters hasted then
The cumbrous elements—Earth, Flood, Air, Fire ;
And this ethereal quintessence of Heaven
Flew upward, spirited with various forms,
That rolled orbicular, and turned to stars
Numberless, as thou seest, and how they move :
Each had his place appointed, each his course ; 720
The rest in circuit walls this Universe.
Look downward on that globe, whose hither side
With light from hence, though but reflected, shines.
That place is Earth, the seat of Man ; that light
His day, which else, as the other hemisphere,
Night would invade ; but there the neighbouring
Moon

(So call that opposite fair star) her aid
Timely interposes, and, her monthly round
Still ending, still renewing, through mid-heaven,
With borrowed light her countenance triform 730
Hence fills and empties, to enlighten the Earth,
And in her pale dominion checks the night.
That spot to which I point is Paradise,
Adam's abode ; those lofty shades his bower.
Thy way thou canst not miss ; me mine requires."

Thus said, he turned ; and Satan, bowing low,
As to superior Spirits is wont in Heaven,
Where honour due and reverence none neglects,

Took leave, and toward the coast of Earth beneath,
Down from the ecliptic, sped with hoped success, 740
Throws his steep flight in many an aery wheel,
Nor staid till on Niphates' top he lights.

THE END OF THE THIRD BOOK

PARADISE LOST

BOOK IV

THE ARGUMENT

Satan, now in prospect of Eden, and nigh the place where he must now attempt the bold enterprise which he undertook alone against God and Man, falls into many doubts with himself and many passions—fear, envy, and despair; but at length confirms himself in evil; journeys on to Paradise, whose outward prospect and situation is described; overleaps the bounds; sits, in the shape of a cormorant, on the Tree of Life, as highest in the Garden, to look about him. The Garden described; Satan's first sight of Adam and Eve; his wonder at their excellent form and happy state, but with resolution to work their fall, overhears their discourse; thence gathers that the Tree of Knowledge was forbidden them to eat of under penalty of death, and thereon intends to found his temptation by seducing them to transgress; then leaves them a while, to know further of their state by some other means. Meanwhile Uriel, descending on a sunbeam, warns Gabriel, who had in charge the gate of Paradise, that some evil Spirit had escaped the Deep, and passed at noon by his Sphere, in the shape of a good Angel, down to Paradise, discovered after by his furious gestures in the mount. Gabriel promises to find him ere morning. Night coming on, Adam and Eve discourse of going to their rest; their bower described; their evening worship. Gabriel, drawing forth his bands of night-watch to walk the rounds of Paradise, appoints two strong Angels to Adam's bower, lest the evil Spirit should be there doing some harm to Adam or Eve sleeping: there they find him at the ear of Eve, tempting her in a dream, and bring him, though unwilling, to Gabriel; by whom questioned, he scornfully answers; prepares resistance; but, hindered by a sign from Heaven, flies out of Paradise.

O FOR that warning voice, which he who saw
The Apocalypse heard cry in Heaven aloud,
Then when the Dragon, put to second rout,
Came furious down to be revenged on men,
Woe to the inhabitants on Earth! that now,

While time was, our first parents had been warned
The coming of their secret foe, and scaped,
Haply so scaped, his mortal snare ! For now
Satan, now first inflamed with rage, came down,
The tempter, ere the accuser, of mankind, 10
To wreak on innocent frail Man his loss
Of that first battle, and his flight to Hell.
Yet not rejoicing in his speed, though bold
Far off and fearless, nor with cause to boast,
Begins his dire attempt ; which, nigh the birth
Now rolling, boils in his tumultuous breast,
And like a devilish engine back recoils
Upon himself. Horror and doubt distract
His troubled thoughts, and from the bottom stir
The hell within him ; for within him Hell 20
He brings, and round about him, nor from Hell
One step, no more than from himself, can fly
By change of place. Now conscience wakes despair
That slumbered ; wakes the bitter memory
Of what he was, what is, and what must be
Worse ; of worse deeds worse sufferings must ensue !
Sometimes towards Eden, which now in his view
Lay pleasant, his grieved look he fixes sad ;
Sometimes towards Heaven and the full-blazing Sun,
Which now sat high in his meridian tower : 30
Then, much revolving, thus in sighs began :—

“ O thou that, with surpassing glory crowned,
Look'st from thy sole dominion like the god
Of this new World—at whose sight all the stars
Hide their diminished heads—to thee I call,
But with no friendly voice, and add thy name,
O Sun, to tell thee how I hate thy beams,
That bring to my remembrance from what state
I fell, how glorious once above thy sphere,
Till pride and worse ambition threw me down, 40

Warring in Heaven against Heaven's matchless King !
Ah, wherefore ? He deserved no such return
From me, whom he created what I was
In that bright eminence, and with his good
Upbraided none ; nor was his service hard.
What could be less than to afford him praise,
The easiest recompense, and pay him thanks,
How due ? Yet all his good proved ill in me,
And wrought but malice. Lifted up so high,
I sdained subjection, and thought one step higher 50
Would set me highest, and in a moment quit
The debt immense of endless gratitude,
So burdensome, still paying, still to owe ;
Forgetful what from him I still received ;
And understood not that a grateful mind
By owing owes not, but still pays, at once
Indebted and discharged—what burden then ?
Oh, had his powerful destiny ordained
Me some inferior Angel, I had stood
Then happy ; no unbounded hope had raised 60
Ambition. Yet why not ? Some other Power
As great might have aspired, and me, though mean,
Drawn to his part. But other Powers as great
Fell not, but stand unshaken, from within
Or from without to all temptations armed !
Hadst thou the same free will and power to stand ?
Thou hadst. Whom hast thou then, or what, to accuse,
But Heaven's free love dealt equally to all ?
Be then his love accursed, since, love or hate,
To me alike it deals eternal woe. 70
Nay, cursed be thou ; since against his thy will
Chose freely what it now so justly rues.
Me miserable ! which way shall I fly
Infinite wrath and infinite despair ?
Which way I fly is Hell ; myself am Hell ;

And, in the lowest deep, a lower deep
Still threatening to devour me opens wide,
To which the Hell I suffer seems a Heaven.
O, then, at last relent! Is there no place
Left for repentance, none for pardon left? 80
None left but by submission; and that word
Disdain forbids me, and my dread of shame
Among the Spirits beneath, whom I seduced
With other promises and other vaunts
Than to submit, boasting I could subdue
The Omnipotent. Ay me! they little know
How dearly I abide that boast so vain,
Under what torments inwardly I groan.
While they adore me on the throne of Hell,
With diadem and sceptre high advanced, 90
The lower still I fall, only supreme
In misery: such joy ambition finds!
But say I could repent, and could obtain,
By act of grace, my former state; how soon
Would highth recall high thoughts, how soon unsay
What feigned submission swore! Ease would recant
Vows made in pain, as violent and void
(For never can true reconciliation grow
Where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so deep);
Which would but lead me to a worse relapse 100
And heavier fall: so should I purchase dear
Short intermission, bought with double smart.
This knows my Punisher; therefore as far
From granting he, as I from begging, peace.
All hope excluded thus, behold, instead
Of us, outcast, exiled, his new delight,
Mankind, created, and for him this World!
So farewell hope, and, with hope, farewell fear,
Farewell remorse! All good to me is lost;
Evil, be thou my Good: by thee at least 110

Divided empire with Heaven's King I hold,
By thee, and more than half perhaps will reign ;
As Man ere long, and this new World, shall know."

Thus while he spake, each passion dimmed his face,
Thrice changed with pale—ire, envy, and despair ;
Which marred his borrowed visage, and betrayed
Him counterfeit, if any eye beheld :
For Heavenly minds from such distempers foul
Are ever clear. Whereof he soon aware
Each perturbation smoothed with outward calm, 120
Artificer of fraud ; and was the first
That practised falsehood under saintly show,
Deep malice to conceal, couched with revenge :
Yet not enough had practised to deceive
Uriel, once warned ; whose eye pursued him down
The way he went, and on the Assyrian mount
Saw him disfigured, more than could befall
Spirit of happy sort : his gestures fierce
He marked and mad demeanour, then alone,
As he supposed, all unobserved, unseen. 130

So on he fares, and to the border comes
Of Eden, where delicious Paradise,
Now nearer, crowns with her enclosure green,
As with a rural mound, the champaign head
Of a steep wilderness, whose hairy sides
With thicket overgrown, grotesque and wild,
Access denied ; and overhead up-grew
Insuperable highth of loftiest shade,
Cedar, and pine, and fir, and branching palm,
A sylvan scene, and, as the ranks ascend, 140
Shade above shade, a woody theatre
Of stateliest view. Yet higher than their tops
The verdurous wall of Paradise up-sprung ;
Which to our general sire gave prospect large
Into his nether empire neighbouring round.

And higher than that wall a circling row
Of goodliest trees, loaden with fairest fruit,
Blossoms and fruits at once of golden hue,
Appeared, with gay enamelled colours mixed ;
On which the sun more glad impressed his beams 150
Than in fair evening cloud, or humid bow,
When God hath showered the earth ; so lovely seemed
That landskip. And of pure now purer air
Meets his approach, and to the heart inspires
Vernal delight and joy, able to drive
All sadness but despair. Now gentle gales,
Fanning their odoriferous wings, dispense
Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole
Those balmy spoils. As, when to them who sail
Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past 160
Mozambic, off at sea north-east winds blow
Sabeian odours from the spicy shore
Of Araby the Blest, with such delay
Well pleased they slack their course, and many a league
Cheered with the grateful smell old Ocean smiles ;
So entertained those odorous sweets the Fiend
Who came their bane, though with them better pleased
Than Asmodæus with the fishy fume
That drove him, though enamoured, from the spouse
Of Tobit's son, and with a vengeance sent 170
From Media post to Egypt, there fast bound.

Now to the ascent of that steep savage hill
Satan had journeyed on, pensive and slow ;
But further way found none ; so thick entwined,
As one continued brake, the undergrowth
Of shrubs and tangling bushes had perplexed
All path of man or beast that passed that way.
One gate there only was, and that looked east
On the other side. Which when the Arch-I'elon saw,
Due entrance he disdained, and, in contempt, 180

At one slight bound high overleaped all bound
Of hill or highest wall, and sheer within
Lights on his feet. As when a prowling wolf,
Whom hunger drives to seek new haunt for prey,
Watching where shepherds pen their flocks at eve,
In hurdled cotes amid the field secure,
Leaps o'er the fence with ease into the fold ;
Or as a thief, bent to unhoard the cash
Of some rich burgher, whose substantial doors,
Cross-barred and bolted fast, fear no assault, 190
In at the window climbs, or o'er the tiles ;
So clomb this first grand Thief into God's fold .
So since into his Church lewd hirelings climb
Thence up he flew, and on the Tree of Life,
The middle tree and highest there that grew,
Sat like a cormorant ; yet not true life
Thereby regained, but sat devising death
To them who lived ; nor on the virtue thought
Of that life-giving plant, but only used
For prospect what, well used, had been the pledge 200
Of immortality. So little knows
Any, but God alone, to value right
The good before him, but perverts best things
To worst abuse, or to their meanest use.
Beneath him, with new wonder, now he views,
To all delight of human sense exposed,
In narrow room Nature's whole wealth ; yea, more !—
A Heaven on Earth : for blissful Paradise
Of God the garden was, by him in the east
Of Eden planted. Eden stretched her line 210
From Auran eastward to the royal towers
Of great Seleucia, built by Grecian kings,
Or where the sons of Eden long before
Dwelt in Telassar. In this pleasant soil
His far more pleasant garden God ordained.

Out of the fertile ground he caused to grow
All trees of noblest kind for sight, smell, taste ;
And all amid them stood the Tree of Life,
High eminent, blooming ambrosial fruit
Of vegetable gold ; and next to life, 220
Our death, the Tree of Knowledge, grew fast by—
Knowledge of good, bought dear by knowing ill
Southward through Eden went a river large,
Nor changed his course, but through the shaggy hill
Passed underneath ingulfed ; for God had thrown
That mountain, as his garden-mould, high raised
Upon the rapid current, which, through veins
Of porous earth with kindly thirst up-drawn,
Rose a fresh fountain, and with many a rill
Watered the garden ; thence united fell 230
Down the steep glade, and met the nether flood,
Which from his darksome passage now appears,
And now, divided into four main streams,
Runs diverse, wandering many a famous realm
And country whereof here needs no account ;
But rather to tell how, if Art could tell
How, from that sapphire fount the crisped brooks,
Rolling on orient pearl and sands of gold,
With mazy error under pendent shades
Ran nectar, visiting each plant, and fed 240
Flowers worthy of Paradise, which not nice Art
In beds and curious knots, but Nature boon
Poured forth profuse on hill, and dale, and plain,
Both where the morning sun first warmly smote
The open field, and where the unpierced shade
Imbrowned the noontide bowers. Thus was this place,
A happy rural seat of various view :
Groves whose rich trees wept odorous gums and balm ;
Others whose fruit, burnished with golden rind,
Hung amiable—Hesperian fables true, 250

If true, here only—and of delicious taste.
Betwixt them lawns, or level downs, and flocks
Grazing the tender herb, were interposed,
Or palmy hillock ; or the flowery lap
Of some irriguous valley spread her store,
Flowers of all hue, and without thorn the rose.
Another side, umbrageous grots and caves
Of cool recess, o'er which the mantling vine
Lays forth her purple grape, and gently creeps
Luxuriant ; meanwhile murmuring waters fall 260
Down the slope hills dispersed, or in a lake,
That to the fringed bank with myrtle crowned
Her crystal mirror holds, unite their streams.
The birds their quire apply ; airs, vernal airs,
Breathing the smell of field and grove, attune
The trembling leaves, while universal Pan,
Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance,
Led on the eternal Spring. Not that fair field
Of Enna, where Proserpin gathering flowers,
Herself a fairer flower, by gloomy Dis 270
Was gathered—which cost Ceres all that pain
To seek her through the world—nor that sweet grove
Of Daphne, by Orontes and the inspired
Castalian spring, might with this Paradise
Of Eden strive ; nor that Nyseian isle,
Girt with the river Triton, where old Cham,
Whom Gentiles Ammon call and Libyan Jove,
Hid Amalthea, and her florid son,
Young Bacchus, from his stepdame Rhœa's eye ;
Nor, where Abassin kings their issue guard, 280
Mount Amara (though this by some supposed
True Paradise) under the Ethiop line
By Nilus' head, enclosed with shining rock,
A whole day's journey high, but wide remote
From this Assyrian garden, where the Fiend

Saw undelighted all delight, all kind
Of living creatures, new to sight and strange.
Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall,
Godlike erect, with native honour clad
In naked majesty, seemed lords of all, 290
And worthy seemed ; for in their looks divine
The image of their glorious Maker shone,
Truth, wisdom, sanctitude severe and pure—
Severe, but in true filial freedom placed,
Whence true authority in men : though both
Not equal, as their sex not equal seemed ;
For contemplation he and valour formed,
For softness she and sweet attractive grace ,
He for God only, she for God in him.
His fair large front and eye sublime declared 300
Absolute rule ; and hyacinthine locks
Round from his parted forelock manly hung
Clustering, but not beneath his shoulders broad :
She, as a veil down to the slender waist,
Her unadornèd golden tresses wore
Dishevelled, but in wanton ringlets waved,
As the vine curls her tendrils—which implied
Subjection, but required with gentle sway,
And by her yielded, by him best received
Yielded, with coy submission, modest pride, 310
And sweet, reluctant, amorous delay.
Nor those mysterious parts were then concealed ;
Then was not guilty shame. Dishonest shame
Of Nature's works, honour dishonourable,
Sin-bred, how have ye troubled all mankind
With shows instead, mere shows of seeming pure,
And banished from man's life his happiest life,
Simplicity and spotless innocence !
So passed they naked on, nor shunned the sight
Of God or Angel ; for they thought no ill : 320

So hand in hand they passed, the loveliest pair
That ever since in love's embraces met—
Adam the goodliest man of men since born
His sons ; the fairest of her daughters Eve.
Under a tuft of shade that on a green
Stood whispering soft, by a fresh fountain-side,
They sat them down ; and, after no more toil
Of their sweet gardening labour than sufficed
To recommend cool Zephyr, and make ease
More easy, wholesome thirst and appetite 330
More grateful, to their supper-fruits they fell—
Nectarine fruits, which the compliant boughs
Yielded them, sidelong as they sat recline
On the soft downy bank damasked with flowers.
The savoury pulp they chew, and in the rind,
Still as they thirsted, scoop the brimming stream ;
Nor gentle purpose, nor endearing smiles
Wanted, nor youthful dalliance, as besecms
Fair couple linked in happy nuptial league,
Alone as they. About them frisking played ✓ 340
All beasts of the earth, since wild, and of all chase
In wood or wilderness, forest or den.
Sporting the lion ramped, and in his paw
Dandled the kid ; bears, tigers, ounces, pards,
Gambolled before them ; the unwieldy elephant,
To make them mirth, used all his might, and wreathed
His lithe proboscis ; close the serpent sly,
Insinuating, wove with Gordian twine
His braided train, and of his fatal guile
Gave proof unheeded. Others on the grass 350
Couched, and, now filled with pasture, gazing sat,
Or bedward ruminating ; for the sun,
Declined, was hastening now with prone career
To the Ocean Isles, and in the ascending scale
Of Heaven the stars that usher evening rose :

When Satan, still in gaze as first he stood,
Scarce thus at length failed speech recovered sad :—
“ O Hell ! what do mine eyes with grief behold ?
Into our room of bliss thus high advanced
Creatures of other mould—Earth-born perhaps, 360
Not Spirits, yet to Heavenly Spirits bright
Little inferior—whom my thoughts pursue
With wonder, and could love ; so lively shines
In them divine resemblance, and such grace
The hand that formed them on their shape hath poured.
Ah ! gentle pair, ye little think how nigh
Your change approaches, when all these delights
Will vanish, and deliver ye to woe—
More woe, the more your taste is now of joy :
Happy, but for so happy ill secured 370
Long to continue, and this high seat, your Heaven,
Ill fenced for Heaven to keep out such a foe
As now is entered ; yet no purposed foe
To you, whom I could pity thus forlorn,
Though I unpitied. League with you I seek,
And mutual amity, so strait, so close,
That I with you must dwell, or you with me,
Henceforth. My dwelling, haply, may not please,
Like this fair Paradise, your sense ; yet such
Accept your Maker's work ; he gave it me, 380
Which I as freely give. Hell shall unfold,
To entertain you two, her widest gates,
And send forth all her kings ; there will be room,
Not like these narrow limits, to receive
Your numerous offspring ; if no better place,
Thank him who puts me, loath, to this revenge
On you, who wrong me not, for him who wronged.
And, should I at your harmless innocence
Melt, as I do, yet public reason just—
Honour and empire with revenge enlarged 390

By conquering this new World—compels me now
To do what else, though damned, I should abhor.”

So spake the Fiend, and with necessity,
The tyrant's plea, excused his devilish deeds.
Then from his lofty stand on that high tree
Down he alights among the sportful herd
Of those four-footed kinds, himself now one,
Now other, as their shape served best his end
Nearer to view his prey, and, unespied,
To mark what of their state he more might learn 400
By word or action marked. About them round
A lion now he stalks with fiery glare ;
Then as a tiger, who by chance hath spied
In some purlieu two gentle fawns at play,
Straight crouches close ; then, rising, changes oft
His couchant watch, as one who chose his ground,
Whence rushing he might surest seize them both
Griped in each paw : when Adam, first of men,
To first of women, Eve, thus moving speech,
Turned him all ear to hear new utterance flow :— 410

“ Sole partner and sole part of all these joys,
Dearer thyself than all, needs must the Power
That made us, and for us this ample World,
Be infinitely good, and of his good
As liberal and free as infinite ;
That raised us from the dust, and placed us here
In all this happiness, who at his hand
Have nothing merited, nor can perform
Aught whereof he hath need ; he who requires
From us no other service than to keep 420
This one, this easy charge—of all the trees
In Paradise that bear delicious fruit
So various, not to taste that only Tree
Of Knowledge, planted by the Tree of Life ;
So near grows Death to Life, whate'er Death is—

Some dreadful thing no doubt ; for well thou know'st
God hath pronounced it Death to taste that Tree :
The only sign of our obedience left
Among so many signs of power and rule
Conferred upon us, and dominion given 430
Over all other creatures that possess
Earth, Air, and Sea. Then let us not think hard
One easy prohibition, who enjoy
Free leave so large to all things else, and choice
Unlimited of manifold delights ;
But let us ever praise him, and extol
His bounty, following our delightful task,
To prune these growing plants, and tend these flowers ;
Which, were it toilsome, yet with thee were sweet."

To whom thus Eve replied :—" O thou for whom 440
And from whom I was formed flesh of thy flesh,
And without whom am to no end, my guide
And head ! what thou hast said is just and right.
For we to him, indeed, all praises owe,
And daily thanks—I chiefly, who enjoy
So far the happier lot, enjoying thee
Pre-eminent by so much odds, while thou
Like consort to thyself canst nowhere find.
That day I oft remember, when from sleep
I first awaked, and found myself reposed, 450
Under a shade, on flowers, much wondering where
And what I was, whence thither brought, and how.
Not distant far from thence a murmuring sound
Of waters issued from a cave, and spread
Into a liquid plain ; then stood unmoved,
Pure as the expanse of Heaven. I thither went
With unexperienced thought, and laid me down
On the green bank, to look into the clear
Smooth lake, that to me seemed another sky.
As I bent down to look, just opposite 460

A shape within the watery gleam appeared,
Bending to look on me. I started back,
It started back ; but pleased I soon returned,
Pleased it returned as soon with answering looks
Of sympathy and love. There I had fixed
Mine eyes till now, and pined with vain desire,
Had not a voice thus warned me : ' What thou seest,
What there thou seest, fair creature, is thyself ;
With thee it came and goes : but follow me,
And I will bring thee where no shadow stays 470
Thy coming, and thy soft embraces—he
Whose image thou art ; him thou shalt enjoy
Inseparably thine ; to him shalt bear
Multitudes like thyself, and thence be called
Mother of human race.' What could I do
But follow straight, invisibly thus led ?
Till I espied thee, fair, indeed, and tall,
Under a platane ; yet methought less fair,
Less winning soft, less amiably mild,
Than that smooth watery image. Back I turned ; 480
Thou, following, cried'st aloud, ' Return, fair Eve ;
Whom fliest thou ? Whom thou fliest, of him thou art,
His flesh, his bone ; to give thee being I lent
Out of my side to thee, nearest my heart,
Substantial life, to have thee by my side
Henceforth an individual solace dear :
Part of my soul I seek thee, and thee claim
My other half.' With that thy gentle hand
Seized mine : I yielded, and from that time see
How beauty is excelled by manly grace 490
And wisdom, which alone is truly fair."

So spake our general mother, and, with eyes
Of conjugal attraction unproved,
And meek surrender, half-embracing leaned
On our first father ; half her swelling breast

Naked met his, under the flowing gold
Of her loose tresses hid. He, in delight
Both of her beauty and submissive charms,
Smiled with superior love, as Jupiter
On Juno smiles when he impregns the clouds 500
That shed May flowers, and pressed her matron lip
With kisses pure. Aside the Devil turned
For envy ; yet with jealous leer malign
Eyed them askance, and to himself thus plained :—
“Sight hateful, sight tormenting ! Thus these two,
Imparadised in one another's arms,
The happier Eden, shall enjoy their fill
Of bliss on bliss ; while I to Hell am thrust,
Where neither joy nor love, but fierce desire,
Among our other torments not the least, 510
Still unfulfilled, with pain of longing pines !
Yet let me not forget what I have gained
From their own mouths. All is not theirs, it seems ;
One fatal tree there stands, of Knowledge called,
Forbidden them to taste. Knowledge forbidden ?
Suspicious, reasonless ! Why should their Lord
Envy them that ? Can it be sin to know ?
Can it be death ? And do they only stand
By ignorance ? Is that their happy state,
The proof of their obedience and their faith ? 520
O fair foundation laid whereon to build
Their ruin ! Hence I will excite their minds
With more desire to know, and to reject
Envious commands, invented with design
To keep them low, whom knowledge might exalt
Equal with gods. Aspiring to be such,
They taste and die : what likelier can ensue ?
But first with narrow search I must walk round
This garden, and no corner leave unspied ;
A chance but chance may lead where I may meet 530

Some wandering Spirit of Heaven, by fountain-side,
Or in thick shade retired, from him to draw
What further would be learned. Live while ye may,
Yet happy pair ; enjoy, till I return,
Short pleasures ; for long woes are to succeed !”

So saying, his proud step he scornful turned,
But with sly circumspection, and began
Through wood, through waste, o’er hill, o’er dale, his roam.
Meanwhile in utmost longitude, where Heaven
With Earth and Ocean meets, the setting Sun 540
Slowly descended, and with right aspect
Against the eastern gate of Paradise
Levelled his evening rays. It was a rock
Of alabaster, piled up to the clouds,
Conspicuous far, winding with one ascent
Accessible from Earth, one entrance high ;
The rest was craggy cliff, that overhung
Still as it rose, impossible to climb.
Betwixt these rocky pillars Gabriel sat,
Chief of the angelic guards, awaiting night ; 550
About him exercised heroic games
The unarmed youth of Heaven ; but nigh at hand
Celestial armoury, shields, helms, and spears,
Hung high, with diamond flaming and with gold.
Thither came Uriel, gliding through the even
On a sunbeam, swift as a shooting star
In autumn thwarts the night, when vapours fired
Impress the air, and shows the mariner
From what point of his compass to beware
Impetuous winds. He thus began in haste :— 560

“Gabriel, to thee thy course by lot hath given
Charge and strict watch that to this happy place
No evil thing approach or enter in.
This day at highth of noon came to my sphere
A Spirit, zealous, as he seemed, to know

More of the Almighty's works, and chiefly Man,
God's latest image. I described his way
Bent all on speed, and marked his aery gait,
But in the mount that lies from Eden north,
Where he first lighted, soon discerned his looks 570
Alien from Heaven, with passions foul obscured.
Mine eye pursued him still, but under shade
Lost sight of him. One of the banished crew,
I fear, hath ventured from the Deep, to raise
New troubles ; him thy care must be to find."

To whom the wingèd Warrior thus returned :—
" Uriel, no wonder if thy perfect sight,
Amid the Sun's bright circle where thou sitt'st,
See far and wide. In at this gate none pass
The vigilance here placed, but such as come 580
Well known from Heaven ; and since meridian hour
No creature thence. If Spirit of other sort,
So minded, have o'erleaped these earthy bounds
On purpose, hard thou know'st it to exclude
Spiritual substance with corporeal bar.
But, if within the circuit of these walks,
In whatsoever shape, he lurk of whom
Thou tell'st, by morrow dawning I shall know."

So promised he ; and Uriel to his charge
Returned on that bright beam, whose point now raised
Bore him slope downward to the Sun, now fallen 591
Beneath the Azores ; whether the Prime Orb,
Incredible how swift, had thither rolled
Diurnal, or this less volúbile Earth,
By shorter flight to the east, had left him there
Arraying with reflected purple and gold
The clouds that on his western throne attend.

Now came still Evening on, and Twilight gray
Had in her sober livery all things clad ;
Silence accompanied ; for beast and bird,

They to their grassy couch, these to their nests,
Were slunk, all but the wakeful nightingale.
She all night long her amorous descant sung :
Silence was pleased. Now glowed the firmament
With living sapphires ; Hesperus, that led
The starry host, rode brightest, till the Moon,
Rising in clouded majesty, at length
Apparent queen, unveiled her peerless light,
And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw ;
When Adam thus to Eve :—" Fair consort, the hour
Of night, and all things now retired to rest, 611
Mind us of like repose ; since God hath set
Labour and rest, as day and night, to men
Successive, and the timely dew of sleep,
Now falling with soft slumberous weight, inclines
Our eye-lids. Other creatures all day long
Rove idle, unemployed, and less need rest ;
Man hath his daily work of body or mind
Appointed, which declares his dignity,
And the regard of Heaven on all his ways ; 620
While other animals unactive range,
And of their doings God takes no account.
To-morrow, ere fresh morning streak the east
With first approach of light, we must be risen,
And at our pleasant labour, to reform
Yon flowery arbours, yonder alleys green,
Our walk at noon, with branches overgrown,
That mock our scant manuring, and require
More hands than ours to lop their wanton growth.
Those blossoms also, and those dropping gums, 630
That lie bestrewn, unsightly and unsmooth,
Ask riddance, if we mean to tread with ease.
Meanwhile, as Nature wills, Night bids us rest."

To whom thus Eve, with perfect beauty adorned : —
" My author and disposer, what thou bidd'st

Unargued I obey. So God ordains :
God is thy law, thou mine : to know no more
Is woman's happiest knowledge, and her praise.
With thee conversing, I forget all time,
All seasons, and their change ; all please alike. 640
Sweet is the breath of Morn, her rising sweet,
With charm of earliest birds ; pleasant the Sun,
When first on this delightful land he spreads
His orient beams, on herb, tree, fruit, and flower,
Glistening with dew ; fragrant the fertile Earth
After soft showers ; and sweet the coming-on
Of grateful Evening mild ; then silent Night,
With this her solemn bird, and this fair Moon,
And these the gems of Heaven, her starry train :
But neither breath of Morn, when she ascends 650
With charm of earliest birds ; nor rising Sun
On this delightful land ; nor herb, fruit, flower,
Glistening with dew ; nor fragrance after showers ;
Nor grateful Evening mild ; nor silent Night,
With this her solemn bird, nor walk by moon,
Or glittering star-light, without thee is sweet.
But wherefore all night long shine these ? for whom
This glorious sight, when sleep hath shut all eyes ?"

To whom our general ancestor replied : --
" Daughter of God and Man, accomplished Eve, 660
Those have their course to finish round the Earth
By morrow evening, and from land to land
In order, though to nations yet unborn,
Ministering light prepared, they set and rise ;
Lest total Darkness should by night regain
Her old possession, and extinguish life
In nature and all things ; which these soft fires
Not only enlighten, but with kindly heat
Of various influence foment and warm,
Temper or nourish, or in part shed down 670

Their stellar virtue on all kinds that grow
On Earth, made hereby apter to receive
Perfection from the Sun's more potent ray.
These, then, though unbeheld in deep of night,
Shine not in vain. Nor think, though men were none,
That Heaven would want spectators, God want praise.
Millions of spiritual creatures walk the Earth
Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep :
All these with ceaseless praise his works behold
Both day and night. How often, from the steep 680
Of echoing hill or thicket, have we heard
Celestial voices to the midnight air,
Sole, or responsive each to other's note,
Singing their great Creator ! Oft in bands
While they keep watch, or nightly rounding walk,
With heavenly touch of instrumental sounds
In full harmonic number joined, their songs
Divide the night, and lift our thoughts to Heaven "

Thus talking, hand in hand alone they passed
On to their blissful bower. It was a place 690
Chosen by the sovran Planter, when he framed
All things to Man's delightful use. The roof
Of thickest covert was inwoven shade,
Laurel and myrtle, and what higher grew
Of firm and fragrant leaf ; on either side
Acanthus, and each odorous bushy shrub,
Fenced up the verdant wall ; each beauteous flower,
Iris all hues, roses, and jessamine,
Reared high their flourished heads between, and wrought
Mosaic ; under foot the violet, 700
Crocus, and hyacinth, with rich inlay
Broidered the ground, more coloured than with stone
Of costliest emblem. Other creature here,
Beast, bird, insect, or worm, durst enter none ;
Such was their awe of Man. In shadier bower

More sacred and sequestered, though but feigned,
Pan or Sylvanus never slept, nor Nymph
Nor Faunus haunted. Here, in close recess,
With flowers, garlands, and sweet-smelling herbs,
Espoused Eve decked first her nuptial bed, 710
And heavenly choirs the hymenæan sung,
What day the genial Angel to our sire
Brought her, in naked beauty more adorned,
More lovely, than Pandora, whom the gods
Endowed with all their gifts; and, O! too like
In sad event, when, to the unwiser son
Of Japhet brought by Hermes, she ensnared
Mankind with her fair looks, to be avenged
On him who had stole Jove's authentic fire.

Thus at their shady lodge arrived, both stood, 720
Both turned, and under open sky adored
The God that made both sky, air, earth, and heaven,
Which they beheld, the moon's resplendent globe,
And starry pole:—"Thou also madest the Night,
Maker Omnipotent; and thou the Day,
Which we, in our appointed work employed,
Have finished, happy in our mutual help
And mutual love, the crown of all our bliss
Ordained by thee; and this delicious place,
For us too large, where thy abundance wants 730
Partakers, and uncropt falls to the ground.
But thou hast promised from us two a race
To fill the Earth, who shall with us extol
Thy goodness infinite, both when we wake,
And when we seek, as now, thy gift of sleep."

This said unanimous, and other rites
Observing none, but adoration pure,
Which God likes best, into their inmost bower
Handed they went; and, eased the putting-off
These troublesome disguises which we wear, 740

Straight side by side were laid ; nor turned, I ween,
Adam from his fair spouse, nor Eve the rites
Mysterious of connubial love refused :
Whatever hypocrites austere talk
Of purity, and place, and innocence,
Defaming as impure what God declares
Pure, and commands to some, leaves free to all.
Our Maker bids increase ; who bids abstain
But our destroyer, foe to God and Man ?
Hail, wedded Love, mysterious law, true source 750
Of human offspring, sole propriety
In Paradise of all things common else !
By thee adulterous lust was driven from men
Among the bestial herds to range ; by thee,
Founded in reason, loyal, just, and pure,
Relations dear and all the charities
Of father, son, and brother, first were known.
Far be it that I should write thee sin or blame,
Or think thee unbefitting holiest place,
Perpetual fountain of domestic sweets, 760
Whose bed is undefiled and chaste pronounced,
Present, or past, as saints and patriarchs used.
Here Love his golden shafts employs, here lights
His constant lamp, and waves his purple wings,
Reigns here and revels ; not in the bought smile
Of harlots—loveless, joyless, unendeared,
Casual fruition ; nor in court amours,
Mixed dance, or wanton mask, or midnight ball,
Or serenate, which the starved lover sings
To his proud fair, best quitted with disdain. 770
These, lulled by nightingales, embracing slept,
And on their naked limbs the flowery roof
Showered roses, which the morn repaired. Sleep on,
Blest pair ! and, O ! yet happiest, if ye seek
No happier state, and know to know no more !

Now had Night measured with her shadowy cone
Half-way up-hill this vast sublunar vault,
And from their ivory port the Cherubim
Forth issuing, at the accustomed hour, stood armed
To their night-watches in warlike parade ; 780
When Gabriel to his next in power thus spake :—

“ Uzziel, half these draw off, and coast the south
With strictest watch ; these other wheel the north :
Our circuit meets full west.” As flame they part,
Half wheeling to the shield, half to the spear.
From these, two strong and subtle Spirits he called
That near him stood, and gave them thus in charge :—

“ Ithuriel and Zephon, with winged speed
Search though this Garden ; leave unsearched no nook ;
But chiefly where those two fair creatures lodge, 790
Now laid perhaps asleep, secure of harm.
This evening from the Sun’s decline arrived
Who tells of some infernal Spirit seen
Hitherward bent (who could have thought ?), escaped
The bars of Hell, on errand bad, no doubt :
Such, where ye find, seize fast, and hither bring.”

So saying, on he led his radiant files,
Dazzling the moon ; these to the bower direct
In search of whom they sought. Him there they found
Squat like a toad, close at the ear of Eve, 800
Assaying by his devilish art to reach
The organs of her fancy, and with them forge
Illusions as he list, phantasms and dreams ;
Or if, inspiring venom, he might taint
The animal spirits, that from pure blood arise
Like gentle breaths from rivers pure, thence raise
At least distempered, discontented thoughts,
Vain hopes, vain aims, inordinate desires,
Blown up with high conceits engendering pride.
Him thus intent Ithuriel with his spear 810

Touched lightly ; for no falsehood can endure
Touch of celestial temper, but returns
Of force to its own likeness. Up he starts,
Discovered and surprised. As, when a spark
Lights on a heap of nitrous powder, laid
Fit for the tun, some magazine to store
Against a rumoured war, the smutty grain,
With sudden blaze diffused, inflames the air ;
So started up, in his own shape, the Fiend.
Back stept those two fair Angels, half amazed 820
So sudden to behold the grisly King ;
Yet thus, unmoved with fear, accost him soon :—

“ Which of those rebel Spirits adjudged to Hell
Com'st thou, escaped thy prison ? and, transformed,
Why satt'st thou like an enemy in wait,
Here watching at the head of these that sleep ? ”

“ Know ye not, then,” said Satan, filled with scorn,
“ Know ye not me ? Ye knew me once no mate
For you, there sitting where ye durst not soar !
Not to know me argues yourselves unknown, 830
The lowest of your throng ; or, if ye know,
Why ask ye, and superfluous begin
Your message, like to end as much in vain ? ”

To whom thus Zephon, answering scorn with scorn :—
“ Think not, revolted Spirit, thy shape the same,
Or undiminished brightness, to be known
As when thou stood'st in Heaven upright and pure.
That glory then, when thou no more wast good,
Departed from thee ; and thou resemblest now
Thy sin and place of doom obscure and foul. 840
But come ; for thou, be sure, shalt give account
To him who sent us, whose charge is to keep
This place inviolable, and these from harm.”

So spake the Cherub ; and his grave rebuke,
Severe in youthful beauty, added grace

Invincible. Abashed the Devil stood,
And felt how awful goodness is, and saw
Virtue in her shape how lovely—saw, and pined
His loss ; but chiefly to find here observed
His lustre visibly impaired ; yet seemed 850
Undaunted. “ If I must contend,” said he,
“ Best with the best—the sender, not the sent ;
Or all at once : more glory will be won,
Or less be lost.” “ Thy fear,” said Zephon bold,
“ Will save us trial what the least can do
Single against thee wicked, and thence weak.”

The Fiend replied not, overcome with rage ;
But, like a proud steed reined, went haughty on,
Champing his iron curb. To strive or fly
He held it vain ; awe from above had quelled 860
His heart, not else dismayed. Now drew they nigh
The western point, where those half-rounding guards
Just met, and, closing, stood in squadron joined,
Awaiting next command. To whom their chief,
Gabriel, from the front thus called aloud :—

“ O friends, I hear the tread of nimble feet
Hasting this way, and now by glimpse discern
Ithuriel and Zephon through the shade ;
And with them comes a third, of regal port,
But faded splendour wan, who by his gait 870
And fierce demeanour seems the Prince of Hell—
Not likely to part hence without contest.
Stand firm, for in his look defiance lours.”

He scarce had ended, when those two approached
And brief related whom they brought, where found,
How busied, in what form and posture couched.
To whom, with stern regard, thus Gabriel spake :—
“ Why hast thou, Satan, broke the bounds prescribed
To thy transgressions, and disturbed the charge
Of others, who approve not to transgress 880

By thy example, but have power and right
To question thy bold entrance on this place ;
Employed, it seems, to violate sleep, and those
Whose dwelling God hath planted here in bliss ? ”

To whom thus Satan, with contemptuous brow :—
“ Gabriel, thou hadst in Heaven the esteem of wise ;
And such I held thee ; but this question asked
Puts me in doubt. Lives there who loves his pain ?
Who would not, finding way, break loose from Hell,
Though thither doomed ? Thou wouldst thyself, no
doubt,

890

And boldly venture to whatever place
Farthest from pain, where thou mightst hope to change
Torment with ease, and soonest recompense
Dole with delight ; which in this place I sought :
To thee no reason, who know'st only good,
But evil hast not tried. And wilt object
His will who bound us ? Let him surer bar
His iron gates, if he intends our stay
In that dark durance. Thus much what was asked :
The rest is true ; they found me where they say ; 900
But that implies not violence or harm.”

Thus he in scorn. The warlike Angel moved,
Disdainfully half smiling, thus replied :—
“ O loss of one in Heaven to judge of wise,
Since Satan fell, whom folly overthrew,
And now returns him from his prison scaped,
Gravely in doubt whether to hold them wise
Or not who ask what boldness brought him hither
Unlicensed from his bounds in Hell prescribed !
So wise he judges it to fly from pain
However, and to scape his punishment !
So judge thou still, presumptuous, till the wrath,
Which thou incurr'st by flying, meet thy flight
Sevenfold, and scourge that wisdom back to Hell,

910

Which taught thee yet no better that no pain
Can equal anger infinite provoked.
But wherefore thou alone? Wherefore with thee
Came not all Hell broke loose? Is pain to them
Less pain, less to be fled? or thou than they
Less hardy to endure? Courageous chief, 920
The first in flight from pain, hadst thou alleged.
To thy deserted host this cause of flight,
Thou surely hadst not come sole fugitive."

To which the Fiend thus answered, frowning stern :—
"Not that I less endure, or shrink from pain,
Insulting Angel! well thou know'st I stood
Thy fiercest, when in battle to thy aid
The blasting volleyed thunder made all speed,
And seconded thy else not dreaded spear.
But still thy words at random, as before, 930
Argue thy inexperience what behoves,
From hard assays and ill successes past,
A faithful leader—not to hazard all
Through ways of danger by himself untried.
I, therefore, I alone, first undertook
To wing the desolate Abyss, and spy
This new-created World, whereof in Hell
Fame is not silent, here in hope to find
Better abode, and my afflicted Powers
To settle here on Earth, or in mid Air ; 940
Though for possession put to try once more
What thou and thy gay legions dare against ;
Whose easier business were to serve their Lord
High up in Heaven, with songs to hymn his throne,
And practised distances to cringe, not fight."

To whom the Warrior-Angel soon replied :—
"To say and straight unsay, pretending first
Wise to fly pain, professing next the spy,
Argues no leader, but a liar traced,

Satan ; and couldst thou 'faithful' add ? O name, 950
O sacred name of faithfulness profaned !
Faithful to whom ? to thy rebellious crew ?
Army of fiends, fit body to fit head !
Was this your discipline and faith engaged,
Your military obedience, to dissolve
Allegiance to the acknowledged Power Supreme ?
And thou, sly hypocrite, who now wouldst seem
Patron of liberty, who more than thou
Once fawned, and cringed, and servilely adored
Heaven's awful Monarch ? Wherefore, but in hope 960
To dispossess him, and thyself to reign ?
But mark what I areed thee now : Avaunt !
Fly thither whence thou fleddest. If from this hour
Within these hallowed limits thou appear,
Back to the Infernal Pit I drag thee chained,
And seal thee so as henceforth not to scorn
The facile gates of Hell too slightly barred."

So threatened he ; but Satan to no threats
Gave heed, but, waxing more in rage, replied :—

"Then, when I am thy captive, talk of chains, 970
Proud liminary Cherub ! but ere then
Far heavier load thyself expect to feel
From my prevailing arm, though Heaven's King
Ride on thy wings, and thou with thy compeers,
Used to the yoke, draw'st his triumphant wheels
In progress through the road of Heaven star-paved."

While thus he spake, the angelic squadron bright
Turned fiery red, sharpening in moonèd horns
Their phalanx, and began to hem him round
With ported spears, as thick as when a field 980
Of Ceres ripe for harvest waving bends
Her bearded grove of ears which way the wind
Sways them ; the careful ploughman doubting stands
Lest on the threshing-floor his hopeful sheaves

Prove chaff. On the other side, Satan, alarmed,
Collecting all his might, dilated stood,
Like Teneriff or Atlas, unremoved :
His stature reached the sky, and on his crest
Sat Horror plumed ; nor wanted in his grasp
What seemed both spear and shield. Now dreadful deeds
Might have ensued ; nor only Paradise, 991
In this commotion, but the starry cope
Of Heaven perhaps, or all the Elements
At least, had gone to wrack, disturbed and torn
With violence of this conflict, had not soon
The Eternal, to prevent such horrid fray,
Hung forth in Heaven his golden scales, yet seen
Betwixt Astræa and the Scorpion sign,
Wherein all things created first he weighed,
The pendulous round Earth with balanced air 1000
In counterpoise, now ponders all events,
Battles and realms. In these he put two weights,
The sequel each of parting and of fight :
The latter quick up flew, and kicked the beam ;
Which Gabriel spying thus bespake the Fiend :—

“Satan, I know thy strength, and thou know’st mine,
Neither our own, but given ; what folly then
To boast what arms can do ! since thine no more
Than Heaven permits, nor mine, though doubled now
To trample thee as mire. For proof look up, 1010
And read thy lot in yon celestial sign,
Where thou art weighed, and shown how light, how weak
If thou resist.” The Fiend looked up, and knew
His mounted scale aloft : nor more ; but fled
Murmuring ; and with him fled the shades of Night.

PARADISE LOST

BOOK V

THE ARGUMENT

Morning approached, Eve relates to Adam her troublesome dream ; he likes it not, yet comforts her . they come forth to their day labours . their morning hymn at the door of their bower. God, to render Man inexcusable, sends Raphael to admonish him of his obedience, of his free estate, of his enemy near at hand, who he is, and why his enemy, and whatever else may avail Adam to know. Raphael comes down to Paradise ; his appearance described ; his coming discerned by Adam afar off, sitting at the door of his bower ; he goes out to meet him, brings him to his lodge, entertains him with the choicest fruits of Paradise, got together by Eve ; their discourse at table. Raphael performs his message, minds Adam of his state and of his enemy ; relates, at Adam's request, who that enemy is, and how he came to be so, beginning from his first revolt in Heaven, and the occasion thereof ; how he drew his legions after him to the parts of the North, and there incited them to rebel with him, persuading all but only Abdiel, a seraph, who in argument dissuades and opposes him, then forsakes him.

Now Morn, her rosy steps in the eastern clime
Advancing, sowed the earth with orient pearl,
When Adam waked, so custom'd ; for his sleep
Was aery light, from pure digestion bred,
And temperate vapours bland, which the only sound
Of leaves and fuming rills, Aurora's fan,
Lightly dispersed, and the shrill matin song
Of birds on every bough. So much the more
His wonder was to find unawaken'd Eve,
With tresses discomposed, and glowing cheek,
As through unquiet rest. He, on his side
Leaning half raised, with looks of cordial love

Hung over her enamoured, and beheld
Beauty which, whether waking or asleep,
Shot forth peculiar graces ; then, with voice
Mild as when Zephyrus on Flora breathes,
Her hand soft touching, whispered thus :—" Awake,
My fairest, my espoused, my latest found,
Heaven's last, best gift, my ever-new delight !
Awake ! the morning shines, and the fresh field 20
Calls us ; we lose the prime to mark how spring
Our tended plants, how blows the citron grove,
What drops the myrrh, and what the balmy reed,
How nature paints her colours, how the bee
Sits on the bloom extracting liquid sweet."

Such whispering waked her, but with startled eye
On Adam ; whom embracing, thus she spake :—

" O sole in whom my thoughts find all repose,
My glory, my perfection ! glad I see
Thy face, and morn returned ; for I this night 30
(Such night till this I never passed) have dreamed,
If dreamed, not, as I oft am wont, of thee,
Works of day past, or morrow's next design,
But of offence and trouble, which my mind
Knew never till this irksome night. Methought
Close at mine ear one called me forth to walk
With gentle voice ; I thought it thine. It said,
' Why sleep'st thou, Eve ? now is the pleasant time,
The cool, the silent, save where silence yields
To the night-warbling bird, that now awake 40
Tunes sweetest his love-laboured song ; now reigns
Full-orbed the moon, and, with more pleasing light,
Shadowy sets off the face of things—in vain,
If none regard. Heaven wakes with all his eyes ;
Whom to behold but thee, Nature's desire,
In whose sight all things joy, with ravishment
Attracted by thy beauty still to gaze ?'

I rose as at thy call, but found thee not :
To find thee I directed then my walk ;
And on, methought, alone I passed through ways 50
That brought me on a sudden to the tree
Of interdicted knowledge. Fair it seemed,
Much fairer to my fancy than by day ;
And, as I wondering looked, beside it stood
One shaped and winged like one of those from Heaven
By us oft seen : his dewy locks distilled
Ambrosia. On that tree he also gazed ;
And, ' O fair plant,' said he, ' with fruit surcharged,
Deigns none to ease thy load, and taste thy sweet,
Nor God nor Man ? Is knowledge so despised ? 60
Or envy, or what reserve, forbids to taste ?
Forbid who will, none shall from me withhold
Longer thy offered good, why else set here ?'
This said, he paused not, but with venturous arm
He plucked, he tasted. Me damp horror chilled
At such bold words vouched with a deed so bold ;
But he thus overjoyed : ' O fruit divine,
Sweet of thyself, but much more sweet thus cropt,
Forbidden here, it seems, as only fit
For gods, yet able to make gods of men ! 70
And why not gods of men, since good, the more
Communicated, more abundant grows,
The author not impaired, but honoured more ?
Here, happy creature, fair angelic Eve !
Partake thou also : happy though thou art,
Happier thou may'st be, worthier canst not be.
Taste this, and be henceforth among the gods
Thyself a goddess ; not to Earth confined,
But sometimes in the Air, as we ; sometimes
Ascend to Heaven, by merit thine, and see 80
What life the gods live there, and such live thou.'
So saying, he drew nigh, and to me held,

Even to my mouth of that same fruit held part
Which he had plucked : the pleasant savoury smell
So quickened appetite that I, methought,
Could not but taste. Forthwith up to the clouds
With him I flew, and underneath beheld
The Earth outstretched immense, a prospect wide
And various. Wondering at my flight and change
To this high exaltation, suddenly 90
My guide was gone, and I, methought, sunk down,
And fell asleep ; but, O, how glad I waked
To find this but a dream !” Thus Eve her night
Related, and thus Adam answered sad :—

“ Best image of myself, and dearer half,
The trouble of thy thoughts this night in sleep
Affects me equally ; nor can I like
This uncouth dream—of evil sprung, I fear ;
Yet evil whence ? In thee can harbour none,
Created pure. But know that in the soul 100
Are many lesser faculties, that serve
Reason as chief. Among these Fancy next
Her office holds ; of all external things,
Which the five watchful senses represent,
She forms imaginations, aery shapes,
Which Reason, joining or disjoining, frames
All what we affirm or what deny, and call
Our knowledge or opinion ; then retires
Into her private cell when Nature rests.
Oft, in her absence, mimic Fancy wakes 110
To imitate her ; but, misjoining shapes,
Wild work produces oft, and most in dreams,
Ill matching words and deeds long past or late.
Some such resemblances, methinks, I find
Of our last evening’s talk in this thy dream,
But with addition strange. Yet be not sad :
Evil into the mind of God or Man

May come and go, so unapproved, and leave
No spot or blame behind ; which gives me hope
That what in sleep thou didst abhor to dream 120
Waking thou never wilt consent to do.
Be not disheartened, then, nor cloud those looks,
That wont to be more cheerful and serene
Than when fair Morning first smiles on the world ;
And let us to our fresh employments rise
Among the groves, the fountains, and the flowers,
That open now their choicest bosomed smells,
Reserved from night, and kept for thee in store."

So cheered he his fair spouse ; and she was cheered,
But silently a gentle tear let fall 130
From either eye, and wiped them with her hair :
Two other precious drops that ready stood,
Each in their crystal sluice, he, ere they fell,
Kissed as the gracious signs of sweet remorse
And pious awe, that feared to have offended.

So all was cleared, and to the field they haste.
But first, from under shady arborous roof
Soon as they forth were come to open sight
Of day-spring, and the Sun—who, scarce uprisen,
With wheels yet hovering o'er the ocean-brim, 140
Shot parallel to the Earth his dewy ray,
Discovering in wide landskip all the east
Of Paradise and Eden's happy plains—
Lowly they bowed, adoring, and began
Their orisons, each morning duly paid
In various style ; for neither various style
Nor holy rapture wanted they to praise
Their Maker, in fit strains pronounced, or sung
Unmeditated ; such prompt eloquence
Flowed from their lips, in prose or numerous verse, 150
More tuneable than needed lute or harp
To add more sweetness : And they thus began :—

“These are thy glorious works, Parent of good,
Almighty ! thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair : Thyself how wondrous then !
Unspeakable ! who sitt’st above these heavens
To us invisible, or dimly seen
In these thy lowest works ; yet these declare
Thy goodness beyond thought, and power divine.
Speak, ye who best can tell, ye Sons of Light, 160
Angels—for ye behold him, and with songs
And choral symphonies, day without night,
Circle his throne rejoicing—ye in Heaven ;
On Earth join, all ye creatures, to extol
Him first, him last, him midst, and without end.
Fairest of Stars, last in the train of Night,
If better thou belong not to the Dawn,
Sure pledge of day, that crown’st the smiling morn
With thy bright circlet, praise him in thy sphere
While day arises, that sweet hour of prime. 170
Thou Sun, of this great World both eye and soul,
Acknowledge him thy greater ; sound his praise
In thy eternal course, both when thou climb’st,
And when high noon hast gained, and when thou
fall’st.
Moon, that now meet’st the orient Sun, now fliest,
With the fixed stars, fixed in their orb that flies ;
And ye five other wandering Fires, that move
In mystic dance, not without song, resound
His praise who out of Darkness called up Light.
Air, and ye Elements, the eldest birth 180
Of Nature’s womb, that in quaternion run
Perpetual circle, multiform, and mix
And nourish all things, let your ceaseless change
Vary to our great Maker still new praise.
Ye Mists and Exhalations, that now rise
From hill or steaming lake, dusky or gray,

Till the sun paint your fleecy skirts with gold,
In honour to the World's great Author rise ;
Whether to deck with clouds the uncoloured sky,
Or wet the thirsty earth with falling showers, 190
Rising or falling, still advance his praise.
His praise, ye Winds, that from four quarters blow,
Breathe soft or loud ; and wave your tops, ye Pines,
With every Plant, in sign of worship wave.
Fountains and ye, that warble, as ye flow,
Melodious murmurs, warbling tune his praise.
Join voices, all ye living Souls. Ye Birds,
That, singing, up to Heaven-gate ascend,
Bear on your wings and in your notes his praise.
Ye that in waters glide, and ye that walk 200
The earth, and stately tread, or lowly creep,
Witness if I be silent, morn or even,
To hill or valley, fountain, or fresh shade,
Made vocal by my song, and taught his praise.
Hail, universal Lord ! Be bounteous still
To give us only good ; and, if the night
Have gathered aught of evil, or concealed,
Disperse it, as now light dispels the dark."

So prayed they innocent, and to their thoughts
Firm peace recovered soon, and wonted calm. 210
On to their morning's rural work they haste,
Among sweet dews and flowers, where any row
Of fruit-trees, over-woody, reached too far
Their pampered boughs, and needed hands to check
Fruitless embraces : or they led the vine
To wed her elm ; she, spoused, about him twines
Her marriageable arms, and with her brings
Her dower, the adopted clusters, to adorn
His barren leaves. Them thus employed beheld
With pity Heaven's high King, and to him called 220
Raphaël, the sociable Spirit, that deigned

To travel with Tobias, and secured
His marriage with the seven-times-wedded maid.

“ Raphael,” said he, “ thou hear’st what stir on Earth
Satan, from Hell scaped through the darksome Gulf,
Hath raised in Paradise, and how disturbed
This night the human pair ; how he designs
In them at once to ruin all mankind.

Go, therefore ; half this day, as friend with friend,
Converse with Adam, in what bower or shade 230
Thou find’st him from the heat of noon retired
To respite his day-labour with repast

Or with repose ; and such discourse bring on
As may advise him of his happy state—
Happiness in his power left free to will,
Left to his own free will, his will though free
Yet mutable. Whence warn him to beware
He swerve not, too secure : tell him withal
His danger, and from whom ; what enemy,
Late fallen himself from Heaven, is plotting now 240
The fall of others from like state of bliss.

By violence ? no, for that shall be withstood ;
But by deceit and lies. This let him know,
Lest, wilfully transgressing, he pretend
Surprisal, unadmonished, unforewarned.”

So spake the Eternal Father, and fulfilled
All justice. Nor delayed the wingèd Saint
After his charge received ; but from among
Thousand celestial Ardours, where he stood
Veiled with his gorgeous wings, upspringing light, 250
Flew through the midst of Heaven. The angelic quires,
On each hand parting, to his speed gave way
Through all the empyreal road, till, at the gate
Of Heaven arrived, the gate self-opened wide,
On golden hinges turning, as by work
Divine the sovran Architect had framed.

From hence—no cloud or, to obstruct his sight,
Star interposed, however small—he sees,
Not unconform to other shining globes,
Earth, and the Garden of God, with cedars crowned 260
Above all hills ; as when by night the glass
Of Galileo, less assured, observes
Imagined lands and regions in the Moon ;
Or pilot from amidst the Cyclades
Delos or Samos first appearing kens,
A cloudy spot. Down thither prone in flight
He speeds, and through the vast ethereal sky
Sails between worlds and worlds, with steady wing
Now on the polar winds ; then with quick fan
Winnows the buxom air, till, within soar 270
Of towering eagles, to all the fowls he seems
A phoenix, gazed by all, as that sole bird,
When, to enshrine his relics in the Sun's
Bright temple, to Egyptian Thebes he flies.
At once on the eastern cliff of Paradise
He lights, and to his proper shape returns,
A Seraph winged. Six wings he wore, to shade
His lincaments divine : the pair that clad
Each shoulder broad came mantling o'er his breast
With regal ornament ; the middle pair 280
Girt like a starry zone his waist, and round
Skirted his loins and thighs with downy gold
And colours dipt in heaven ; the third his feet
Shadowed from either heel with feathered mail,
Sky-tinctured grain. Like Maia's son he stood,
And shook his plumes, that heavenly fragrance filled
The circuit wide. Straight knew him all the bands
Of Angels under watch, and to his state
And to his message high in honour rise ;
For on some message high they guessed him bound.
Their glittering tents he passed, and now is come 291

Into the blissful field, through groves of myrrh,
And flowering odours, cassia, nard, and balm,
A wilderness of sweets ; for Nature here
Wantoned as in her prime, and played at will
Her virgin fancies, pouring forth more sweet,
Wild above rule or art, enormous bliss.
Him, through the spicy forest onward come,
Adam discerned, as in the door he sat
Of his cool bower, while now the mounted Sun 300
Shot down direct his fervid rays, to warm
Earth's inmost womb, more warmth than Adam needs ;
And Eve, within, due at her hour, prepared
For dinner savoury fruits, of taste to please
True appetite, and not disrelish thirst
Of nectarous draughts between, from milky stream,
Berry or grape : to whom thus Adam called :—

“ Haste hither, Eve, and, worth thy sight, behold
Eastward among those trees what glorious Shape
Comes this way moving ; seems another morn 310
Risen on mid-noon. Some great behest from Heaven
To us perhaps he brings, and will voutsafe
This day to be our guest. But go with speed,
And what thy stores contain bring forth, and pour
Abundance fit to honour and receive
Our heavenly stranger ; well we may afford
Our givers their own gifts, and large bestow
From large bestowed, where Nature multiplies
Her fertile growth, and by disburdening grows
More fruitful ; which instructs us not to spare.” 320

To whom thus Eve :—“ Adam, Earth's hallowed
mould,
Of God inspired, small store will serve where store,
All seasons, ripe for use hangs on the stalk ;
Save what, by frugal storing, firmness gains
To nourish, and superfluous moist consumes.

But I will haste, and from each bough and brake,
Each plant and juiciest gourd, will pluck such choice
To entertain our Angel-guest as he,
Beholding, shall confess that here on Earth
God hath dispensed his bounties as in Heaven." 330

So saying, with dispatchful looks in haste
She turns, on hospitable thoughts intent
What choice to choose for delicacy best,
What order so contrived as not to mix
Tastes, not well joined, inelegant, but bring
Taste after taste upheld with kindest change :
Bestirs her then, and from each tender stalk
Whatever Earth, all-bearing mother, yields
In India East or West, or middle shore
In Pontus or the Punic coast, or where 340
Alcinous reigned, fruit of all kinds, in coat
Rough or smooth rined, or bearded husk, or shell,
She gathers, tribute large, and on the board
Heaps with unsparing hand. For drink the grape
She crushes, inoffensive must, and meaths
From many a berry, and from sweet kernels pressed
She tempers dulcet creams—nor these to hold
Wants her fit vessels pure ; then strews the ground
With rose and odours from the shrub unfumed.

Meanwhile our primitive great Sire, to meet 350
His godlike guest, walks forth, without more train
Accompanied than with his own complete
Perfections ; in himself was all his state,
More solemn than the tedious pomp that waits
On princes, when their rich retinue long
(Of horses led and grooms besmeared with gold
Dazzles the crowd and sets them all agape.
Nearer his presence, Adam, though not awed,
Yet with submissive approach and reverence meek,
As to a superior nature, bowing low, 360

Thus said.—“Native of Heaven (for other place
 None can than Heaven such glorious Shape contain),
 Since, by descending from the Thrones above,
 Those happy places thou hast deigned a while
 To want, and honour these, voutsafe with us,
 Two only, who yet by sovran gift possess
 This spacious ground, in yonder shady bower
 To rest, and what the Garden choicest bears
 To sit and taste, till this meridian heat
 Be over, and the sun more cool decline.” 370

Whom thus the Angelic Virtue answered mild—
 “Adam, I therefore came; nor art thou such
 Created, or such place hast here to dwell,
 As may not oft invite, though Spirits of Heaven,
 To visit thee. Lead on, then, where thy bower
 O’ershades; for these mid-hours, till evening rise,
 I have at will.” So to the sylvan lodge
 They came, that like Pomona’s arbour smiled,
 With flowerets decked and fragrant smells. But Eve,
 Undecked, save with herself, more lovely fair 380
 Than wood-nymph, or the fairest goddess feigned
 Of three that in Mount Ida naked strove,
 Stood to entertain her guest from Heaven; no veil
 She needed, virtue-proof; no thought infirm
 Altered her cheek. On whom the Angel “Hail!”
 Bestowed—the holy salutation used
 Long after to blest Mary, second Eve:—

“Hail! Mother of mankind, whose fruitful womb
 Shall fill the world more numerous with thy sons
 Than with these various fruits the trees of God 390
 Have heaped this table!” Raised of grassy turf
 Their table was, and mossy seats had round,
 And on her ample square, from side to side,
 All Autumn piled, though Spring and Autumn here
 Danced hand-in-hand. A while discourse they hold-

No fear lest dinner cool—when thus began
Our Author :—" Heavenly Stranger, please to taste
These bounties, which our Nourisher, from whom
All perfect good, unmeasured out, descends,
To us for food and for delight hath caused 400
The Earth to yield : unsavoury food, perhaps,
To Spiritual Natures ; only this I know,
That one Celestial Father gives to all."

To whom the Angel :—" Therefore, what he gives
(Whose praise be ever sung) to Man, in part
Spiritual, may of purest Spirits be found
No ingrateful food : and food alike those pure
Intelligential substances require
As doth your Rational ; and both contain 410
Within them every lower faculty
Of sense, whereby they hear, see, smell, touch, taste,
Tasting concoct, digest, assimilate,
And corporeal to incorporeal turn.
For know, whatever was created needs
To be sustained and fed. Of Elements
The grosser feeds the purer : Earth the Sea ;
Earth and the Sea feed Air ; the Air those Fires
Æthereal, and, as lowest, first the Moon ;
Whence in her visage round those spots, unpurged
Vapours not yet into her substance turned. 420
Nor doth the Moon no nourishment exhale
From her moist continent to higher Orbs.
The Sun, that light imparts to all, receives
From all his alimential recompense
In humid exhalations, and at even
Sups with the Ocean. Though in Heaven the trees
Of life ambrosial fruitage bear, and vines
Yield nectar—though from off the boughs each morn
We brush mellifluous dew and find the ground
Covered with pearly grain—yet God hath here 430

Varied his bounty so with new delights
As may compare with Heaven ; and to taste
Think not I shall be nice." So down they sat,
And to their viands fell ; nor seemingly
The Angel, nor in mist—the common gloss
Of theologians—but with keen dispatch
Of real hunger, and concoctive heat
To transubstantiate : what redounds transpires
Through Spirits with ease ; nor wonder, if by fire
Of sooty coal the empiric alchemist 440
Can turn, or holds it possible to turn,
Metals of drossiest ore to perfect gold,
As from the mine. Meanwhile at table Eve
Ministered naked, and their flowing cups
With pleasant liquors crowned. O innocence
Deserving Paradise ! If ever, then,
Then had the Sons of God excuse to have been
Enamoured at that sight. But in those hearts
Love unlibidinous reigned, nor jealousy
Was understood, the injured lover's hell. 450

Thus when with meats and drinks they had sufficed,
Not burdened, nature, sudden mind arose
In Adam not to let the occasion pass,
Given him by this great conference, to know
Of things above his world, and of their being
Who dwell in Heaven, whose excellence he saw
Transcend his own so far, whose radiant forms
Divine effulgence, whose high power so far
Exceeded human ; and his wary speech
Thus to the empyreal minister he framed :— 460

" Inhabitant with God, now know I well
Thy favour, in this honour done to Man ;
Under whose lowly roof thou hast voutsafed
To enter, and these earthly fruits to taste,
Food not of Angels, yet accepted so

As that more willingly thou couldst not seem
At Heaven's high feasts to have fed: yet what compare?"

To whom the wingèd Hierarch replied :—

"O Adam, one Almighty is, from whom
All things proceed, and up to him return 470
If not depraved from good, created all
Such to perfection ; one first matter all,
Endued with various forms, various degrees
Of substance, and, in things that live, of life ;
But more refined, more spiritous and pure,
As nearer to him placed or nearer tending
Each in their several active spheres assigned,
Till body up to spirit work, in bounds
Proportioned to each kind. So from the root
Springs lighter the green stalk, from thence the leaves
More acry, last the bright consummate flower 481
Spirits odorous breathes : flowers and their fruit,
Man's nourishment, by gradual scale sublimed,
To vital spirits aspire, to animal,
To intellectual ; give both life and sense,
Fancy and understanding ; whence the Soul
Reason receives, and Reason is her being,
Discursive, or Intuitive : Discourse
Is ofttest yours, the latter most is ours,
Differing but in degree, of kind the same. 490
Wonder not, then, what God for you saw good
If I refuse not, but convert, as you,
To proper substance. Time may come when Men
With Angels may participate, and find
No inconvenient diet, nor too light fare ;
And from these corporal nutriments, perhaps,
Your bodies may at last turn all to spirit,
Improved by tract of time, and wing'd ascend
Ethereal, as we, or may at choice
Here or in heavenly paradises dwell, 500

If ye be found obedient, and retain
Unalterably firm his love entire
Whose progeny you are. Meanwhile enjoy
Your fill what happiness this happy state
Can comprehend, incapable of more."

To whom the Patriarch of Mankind replied :—

"O favourable Spirit, propitious guest,
Well hast thou taught the way that might direct
Our knowledge, and the scale of Nature set
From centre to circumference, whereon, 510
In contemplation of created things,
By steps we may ascend to God. But say,
What meant that caution joined, *If ye be found
Obedient?* Can we want obedience, then,
To him, or possibly his love desert,
Who formed us from the dust, and placed us here
Full to the utmost measure of what bliss
Human desires can seek or apprehend?"

To whom the Angel :—"Son of Heaven and Earth,
Attend! That thou art happy, owe to God; 520
That thou continuest such, owe to thyself,
That is, to thy obedience; therein stand.
This was that caution given thee; be advised.
God made thee perfect, not immutable;
And good he made thee; but to persevere
He left it in thy power—ordained thy will
By nature free, not over-ruled by fate
Inextricable, or strict necessity.
Our voluntary service he requires,
Not our necessitated. Such with him 530
Finds no acceptance, nor can find; for how
Can hearts not free be tried whether they serve
Willing or no, who will but what they must
By destiny, and can no other choose?
Myself, and all the Angelic Host, that stand

In sight of God enthroned, our happy state
Hold, as you yours, while our obedience holds.
On other surety none : freely we serve
Because we freely love, as in our will
To love or not ; in this we stand or fall. 540
And some are fallen, to disobedience fallen,
And so from Heaven to deepest Hell. O fall
From what high state of bliss into what woe ! ”

To whom our great Progenitor :—“ Thy words
Attentive, and with more delighted ear,
Divine instructor, I have heard, than when
Cherubic songs by night from neighbouring hills
Aerial music send. Nor knew I not
To be, both will and deed, created free.
Yet that we never shall forget to love 550
Our Maker, and obey him whose command
Single is yet so just, my constant thoughts
Assured me, and still assure ; though what thou tell’st
Hath passed in Heaven some doubt within me move,
But more desire to hear, if thou consent,
The full relation, which must needs be strange,
Worthy of sacred silence to be heard.
And we have yet large day, for scarce the Sun
Hath finished half his journey, and scarce begins
His other half in the great zone of heaven.” 560

Thus Adam made request ; and Raphael,
After short pause assenting, thus began :—

“ High matter thou enjoin’st me, O prime of Men—
Sad task and hard ; for how shall I relate
To human sense the invisible exploits
Of warring Spirits ? how, without remorse,
The ruin of so many, glorious once
And perfect while they stood ? how, last, unfold
The secrets of another world, perhaps
Not lawful to reveal ? Yet for thy good 570

This is dispensed ; and what surmounts the reach
Of human sense I shall delineate so,
By likening spiritual to corporal forms,
As may express them best—though what if Earth
Be but the shadow of Heaven, and things therein
Each to other like more than on Earth is thought ?

“ As yet this World was not, and Chaos wild
Reigned where these heavens now roll, where Earth
now rests

Upon her centre poised, when on a day
(For Time, though in Eternity, applied 580
To motion, measures all things durable
By present, past, and future), on such day
As Heaven's great year brings forth, the empyreal host
Of Angels, by imperial summons called,
Innumerable before the Almighty's throne
Forthwith from all the ends of Heaven appeared
Under their hierarchs in orders bright.
Ten thousand thousand ensigns high advanced,
Standards and gonfalons, 'twixt van and rear
Stream in the air, and for distinction serve 590
Of hierarchies, of orders, and degrees ;
Or in their glittering tissues bear emblazed
Holy memorials, acts of zeal and love
Recorded eminent. Thus when in orbs
Of circuit inexpressible they stood,
Orb within orb, the Father Infinite,
By whom in bliss embosomed sat the Son,
Amidst, as from a flaming mount, whose top
Brightness had made invisible, thus spake :—

“ Hear, all ye Angels, Progeny of Light, 600
Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers,
Hear my decree, which unrevoked shall stand !
This day I have begot whom I declare
My only Son, and on this holy hill

Him have anointed, whom ye now behold
At my right hand. Your head I him appoint,
And by myself have sworn to him shall bow
All knees in Heaven, and shall confess him Lord.
Under his great vicegerent reign abide,
United as one individual soul,
For ever happy. Him who disobeys
Me disobeys, breaks union, and, that day,
Cast out from God and blessed vision, falls
Into utter darkness, deep engulfed, his place
Ordained without redemption, without end.'

610

"So spake the Omnipotent, and with his words
All seemed well pleased ; all seemed, but were not all.
That day, as other solemn days, they spent
In song and dance, about the sacred hill—
Mystical dance, which yonder starry sphere
Of planets and of fixed in all her wheels
Resembles nearest ; mazes intricate,
Eccentric, intervolved, yet regular
Then most when most irregular they seem ;
And in their motions harmony divine
So smooths her charming tones that God's own ear
Listens delighted. Evening now approached
(For we have also our evening and our morn—
We ours for change delectable, not need),
Forthwith from dance to sweet repast they turn
Desirous : all in circles as they stood,
Tables are set, and on a sudden piled
With Angels' food ; and rubied nectar flows
In pearl, in diamond, and massy gold,
Fruit of delicious vines, the growth of Heaven.
On flowers reposed, and with fresh flowerets crowned,
They eat, they drink, and in communion sweet
Quaff immortality and joy, secure
Of surfeit where full measure only bounds

620

630

Excess, before the all-bounteous King, who showered
With copious hand, rejoicing in their joy. 641
Now, when ambrosial Night, with clouds exhaled
From that high mount of God whence light and shade
Spring both, the face of brightest Heaven had changed
To grateful twilight (for Night comes not there
In darker veil), and roseate dewes disposed
All but the unsleeping eyes of God to rest,
Wide over all the plain, and wider far
Than all this globous Earth in plain outspread
(Such are the courts of God), the Angelic throng, 650
Dispersed in bands and files, their camp extend
By living streams among the trees of life—
Pavilions numberless and sudden reared,
Celestial tabernacles, where they slept,
Fanned with cool winds ; save those who, in their course,
Melodious hymns about the sovran throne
Alternate all night long. But not so waked
Satan—so call him now ; his former name
Is heard no more in Heaven. He, of the first,
If not the first Archangel, great in power, 660
In favour, and pre-eminence, yet fraught
With envy against the Son of God, that day
Honoured by his great Father, and proclaimed
Messiah, King Anointed, could not bear,
Through pride, that sight, and thought himself impaired.
Deep malice thence conceiving and disdain,
Soon as midnight brought on the dusky hour
Friendliest to sleep and silence, he resolved
With all his legions to dislodge, and leave
Unworshipped, unbeyed, the Throne supreme, 670
Contemptuous, and, his next subordinate
Awakening, thus to him in secret spake : —

“ ‘ Sleep'st thou, companion dear ? what sleep can close
Thy eyelids ? and rememberest what decree

Of yesterday, so late, hath passed the lips
Of Heaven's Almighty? Thou to me thy thoughts
Wast wont, I mine to thee was wont, to impart;
Both waking we were one; how, then, can now
Thy sleep dissent? New laws thou seest imposed;
New laws from him who reigns new minds may raise
In us who serve—new counsels, to debate 681
What doubtful may ensue. More in this place
To utter is not safe. Assemble thou
Of all those myriads which we lead the chief;
Tell them that, by command, ere yet dim Night
Her shadowy cloud withdraws, I am to haste, —
And all who under me their banners wave,
Homeward with flying march where we possess
The quarters of the North, there to prepare
Fit entertainment to receive our King, 690
The great Messiah, and his new commands,
Who speedily through all the Hierarchies
Intends to pass triumphant, and give laws.'

"So spake the false Archangel, and infused
Bad influence into the unwary breast
Of his associate. He together calls,
Or several one by one, the regent Powers,
Under him regent; tells, as he was taught,
That, the Most High commanding, now ere Night,
Now ere dim Night had disencumbered Heaven, 700
The great hierarchal standard was to move;
Tells the suggested cause, and casts between
Ambiguous words and jealousies, to sound
Or taint integrity. But all obeyed
The wonted signal, and superior voice
Of their great Potentate; for great indeed
His name, and high was his degree in Heaven:
His countenance, as the morning-star that guides
The starry flock, allured them, and with lies

Drew after him the third part of Heaven's host. 710
Meanwhile, the Eternal Eye, whose sight discerns
Abstrusest thoughts, from forth his holy mount,
And from within the golden lamps that burn
Nightly before him, saw without their light
Rebellion rising—saw in whom, how spread
Among the Sons of Morn, what multitudes
Were banded to oppose his high decree ;
And, smiling, to his only Son thus said :—

“ Son, thou in whom my glory I behold
In full resplendence, Heir of all my might, 720
Nearly it now concerns us to be sure
Of our omnipotence, and with what arms
We mean to hold what anciently we claim
Of deity or empire : such a foe
Is rising, who intends to erect his throne
Equal to ours, throughout the spacious North ;
Nor so content, hath in his thought to try
In battle what our power is or our right.
Let us advise, and to this hazard draw
With speed what force is left, and all employ 730
In our defence, lest unawares we lose
This our high place, our sanctuary, our hill.’

“ To whom the Son, with calm aspect and clear
Lightening divine, ineffable, serene,
Made answer :—‘ Mighty Father, thou thy foes
Justly hast in derision, and secure
Laugh'st at their vain designs and tumults vain—
Matter to me of glory, whom their hate
Illustrates, when they see all regal power
Given me to quell their pride, and in event 740
Know whether I be dextrous to subdue
Thy rebels, or be found the worst in Heaven.’

“ So spake the Son ; but Satan with his Powers
Far was advanced on wingèd speed, an host

Innumerable as the stars of night,
Or stars of morning, dew-drops which the sun
Impearls on every leaf and every flower.
Regions they passed, the mighty regencies
Of Seraphim and Potentates and Thrones
In their triple degrees—regions to which 750
All thy dominion, Adam, is no more
Than what this garden is to all the earth
And all the sea, from one entire globose
Stretched into longitude ; which having passed,
At length into the limits of the North
They came, and Satan to his royal seat
High on a hill, far-blazing, as a mount
Raised on a mount, with pyramids and towers /
From diamond quarries hewn and rocks of gold—
The palace of great Lucifer (so call 760
That structure, in the dialect of men
Interpreted), which, not long after, he,
Affecting all equality with God,
In imitation of that mount whercon
Messiah was declared in sight of Heaven,
The Mountain of the Congregation called ;
For thither he assembled all his train,
Pretending so commanded to consult
About the great reception of their King
Thither to come, and with calumnious art 770
Of counterfeited truth thus held their cars :—

“ Thrones, Dominations, Princcdoms, Virtues,
Powers—

If these magnific titles yet remain
Not merely titular, since by decree
Another now hath to himself engrossed
All power, and us eclipsed under the name
Of King Anointed ; for whom all this haste
Of midnight march, and hurried meeting here,

This only to consult, how we may best,
 With what may be devised of honours new, 780
 Receive him coming to receive from us
 Knee-tribute yet unpaid, prostration vile !
 Too much to one ! but double how endured—
 To one and to his image now proclaimed ?
 But what if better counsels might erect
 Our minds, and teach us to cast off this yoke ?
 Will ye submit your necks, and choose to bend
 The supple knee ? Ye will not, if I trust
 To know ye right, or if ye know yourselves
 Natives and Sons of Heaven possessed before 790
 By none, and, if not equal all, yet free,
 Equally free ; for orders and degrees
 Jar not with liberty, but well consist.
 Who can in reason, then, or right, assume
 Monarchy over such as live by right
 His equals—if in power and splendour less,
 In freedom equal ? or can introduce
 Law and edict on us, who without law
 Err not ? much less for this to be our Lord,
 And look for adoration, to the abuse
 Of those imperial titles which assert
 Our being ordained to govern, not to serve !'

“ Thus far his bold discourse without control
 Had audience, when, among the Seraphim,
 Abdiel, than whom none with more zeal adored
 The Deity, and divine commands obeyed,
 Stood up, and in a flame of zeal severe
 The current of his fury thus opposed :—

“ ‘ O argument blasphemous, false, and proud
 Words which no ear ever to hear in Heaven 810
 Expected ; least of all from thee, ingrate,
 In place thyself so high above thy peers !
 Canst thou with impious obloquy condemn

The just decree of God, pronounced and sworn,
That to his only Son, by right endued
With regal sceptre, every soul in Heaven
Shall bend the knee, and in that honour due
Confess him rightful King? Unjust, thou say'st,
Flatly unjust, to bind with laws the free,
And equal over equals to let reign, 820
One over all with unsucceeded power !
Shalt thou give law to God? shalt thou dispute
With Him the points of liberty, who made
Thee what thou art, and formed the Powers of Heaven
Such as he pleased, and circumscribed their being ?
Yet, by experience taught, we know how good,
And of our good and of our dignity
How provident, he is—how far from thought
To make us less ; bent rather to exalt
Our happy state, under one head more near 830
United. But—to grant it thee unjust
That equal over equals monarch reign—
Thyself, though great and glorious, dost thou count,
Or all angelic nature joined in one,
Equal to him, begotten Son, by whom,
As by his Word, the mighty Father made
All things, even thee, and all the Spirits of Heaven
By him created in their bright degrees,
Crowned them with glory, and to their glory named
Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers?—
Essential Powers ; nor by his reign obscured, 841
But more illustrious made ; since he, the head,
One of our number thus reduced becomes ;
His laws our laws ; all honour to him done
Returns our own. Cease, then, this impious rage,
And tempt not these ; but hasten to appease
The incensèd Father and the incensèd Son
While pardon may be found, in time besought.'

“So spake the fervent Angel ; but his zeal
None seconded, as out of season judged, 850
Or singular and rash. Whereat rejoiced
The Apostate, and, more haughty, thus replied —

“‘That we were formed, then, say’st thou? and the work
Of secondary hands, by task transferred
From Father to his Son? Strange point and new!
Doctrine which we would know whence learned! Who
saw

When this creation was? Remember’st thou
Thy making, while the Maker gave thee being?
We know no time when we were not as now,
Know none before us, self-begot, self-raised 860
By our own quickening power when fatal course
Had circled his full orb, the birth mature
Of this our native Heaven, Ethereal Sons.
Our puissance is our own ; our own right hand
Shall teach us highest deeds, by proof to try
Who is our equal. Then thou shalt behold
Whether by supplication we intend
Address, and to begirt the Almighty Throne
Beseeching or besieging. This report,
These tidings, carry to the Anointed King ; 870
And fly, ere evil intercept thy flight.’

“He said ; and, as the sound of waters deep,
Hoarse murmur echoed to his words applause
Through the infinite host. Nor less for that
The flaming Seraph, fearless, though alone,
Encompassed round with foes, thus answered bold :—

“‘O alienate from God, O Spirit accursed,
Forsaken of all good! I see thy fall
Determined, and thy hapless crew involved
In this perfidious fraud, contagion spread 880
Both of thy crime and punishment. Henceforth
No more be troubled how to quit the yoke

Of God's Messiah. Those indulgent laws
Will not be now voutsafed ; other decrees
Against thee are gone forth without recall ;
That golden sceptre which thou didst reject
Is now an iron rod to bruise and break
Thy disobedience. Well thou didst advise ,
Yet not for thy advice or threats I fly
These wicked tents devoted, lest the wrath 890
Impendent, raging into sudden flame, .
Distinguish not : for soon expect to feel
His thunder on thy head, devouring fire.
Then who created thee lamenting learn
When who can uncreate thee thou shalt know.'

" So spake the Seraph Abdiel, faithful found ;
Among the faithless faithful only he ;
Among innumerable false unmoved,
Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,
His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal ; 900
Nor number nor example with him wrought
To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind,
Though single. From amidst them forth he passed,
Long way through hostile scorn, which he sustained
Superior, nor of violence feared aught ;
And with retorted scorn his back he turned
On those proud towers, to swift destruction doomed."

PARADISE LOST

BOOK VI

THE ARGUMENT

Raphael continues to relate how Michael and Gabriel were sent forth to battle against Satan and his Angels. The first fight described : Satan and his Powers retire under night. He calls a council ; invents devilish engines, which, in the second day's fight, put Michael and his Angels to some disorder ; but they at length, pulling up mountains, overwhelmed both the force and machines of Satan. Yet, the tumult not so ending, God, on the third day, sends Messiah his Son, for whom he had reserved the glory of that victory. He, in the power of his Father, coming to the place, and causing all his legions to stand still on either side, with his chariot and thunder driving into the midst of his enemies, pursues them, unable to resist, towards the wall of Heaven ; which opening, they leap down with horror and confusion into the place of punishment prepared for them in the Deep. Messiah returns with triumph to his Father.

“ ALL night the dreadless Angel, unpursued,
Through Heaven's wide champaign held his way, till
Morn,

Waked by the circling Hours, with rosy hand
Unbarred the gates of Light. There is a cave
Within the Mount of God, fast by his throne,
Where Light and Darkness in perpetual round
Lodge and dislodge by turns—which makes through
Heaven

Grateful vicissitude, like day and night ;
Light issues forth, and at the other door
Obsequious Darkness enters, till her hour
To veil the Heaven, though darkness there might well

Seem twilight here. And now went forth the Morn,
Such as in highest Heaven, arrayed in gold
Empyrean ; from before her vanished Night,
Shot through with orient beams ; when all the plain
Covered with thick embattled squadrons bright,
Chariots, and flaming arms, and fiery steeds,
Reflecting blaze on blaze, first met his view.
War he perceived, war in procinct, and found
Already known what he for news had thought 20
To have reported. Gladly then he mixed
Among those friendly Powers, who him received
With joy and acclamations loud, that one,
That of so many myriads fallen yet one,
Returned not lost. On to the sacred hill
They led him, high applauded, and present
Before the seat supreme ; from whence a voice,
From midst a golden cloud, thus mild was heard :—
“ ‘ Servant of God, well done ! Well hast thou fought
The better fight, who single hast maintained 30
Against revolted multitudes the cause
Of truth, in word mightier than they in arms,
And for the testimony of truth hast borne
Universal reproach, far worse to bear
Than violence ; for this was all thy care—
To stand approved in sight of God, though worlds
Judged thee perverse. The easier conquest now
Remains thee—aided by this host of friends,
Back on thy foes more glorious to return
Than scorned thou didst depart ; and to subdue 40
By force who reason for their law refuse—
Right reason for their law, and for their King
Messiah, who by right of merit reigns.
Go, Michael, of celestial armies prince,
And thou, in military prowess next,
Gabriel ; lead forth to battle these my sons

Invincible ; lead forth my armed Saints,
By thousands and by millions ranged for fight,
Equal in number to that godless crew
Rebellious. Them with fire and hostile arms 50
Fearless assault ; and, to the brow of Heaven
Pursuing, drive them out from God and bliss
Into their place of punishment, the gulf
Of Tartarus, which ready opens wide
His fiery chaos to receive their fall.'

" So spake the Sovran Voice ; and clouds began
To darken all the hill, and smoke to roll
In dusky wreaths reluctant flames, the sign
Of wrath awaked ; nor with less dread the loud
Ethereal trumpet from on high gan blow. 60
At which command the Powers Militant
That stood for Heaven, in mighty quadrate joined
Of union irresistible, moved on
In silence their bright legions to the sound
Of instrumental harmony, that breathed
Heroic ardour to adventurous deeds
Under their godlike leaders, in the cause
Of God and his Messiah. On they move,
Indissolubly firm ; nor obvious hill,
Nor straitening vale, nor wood, nor stream, divides 70
Their perfect ranks ; for high above the ground
Their march was, and the passive air upbore
Their nimble tread. As when the total kind
Of birds, in orderly array on wing,
Came summoned over Eden to receive
Their names of thee ; so over many a tract
Of Heaven they marched, and many a province wide,
Tenfold the length of this terrene. At last,
Far in the horizon, to the north, appeared
From skirt to skirt a fiery region, stretched 80
In battailous aspect ; and, nearer view,

Bristled with upright beams innumerable
Of rigid spears, and helmets thronged, and shields
Various, with boastful argument portrayed,
The banded Powers of Satan hasting on
With furious expedition ; for they weened
That self-same day, by fight or by surprise,
To win the Mount of God, and on his throne
To set the envier of his state, the proud
Aspirer. But their thoughts proved fond and vain 90
In the mid-way ; though strange to us it seemed
At first that Angel should with Angel war,
And in fierce hosting meet, who wont to meet
So oft in festivals of joy and love
Unanimous, as sons of one great Sire,
Hymning the Eternal Father. But the shout
Of battle now began, and rushing sound
Of onset ended soon each milder thought.
High in the midst, exalted as a God,
The Apostate in his sun-bright chariot sat, 100
Idol of majesty divine, enclosed
With flaming Cherubim and golden shields ;
Then lighted from his gorgeous throne—for now
'Twixt host and host but narrow space was left,
A dreadful interval, and front to front
Presented stood, in terrible array
Of hideous length. Before the cloudy van,
On the rough edge of battle ere it joined,
Satan, with vast and haughty strides advanced,
Came towering, armed in adamant and gold. 110
Abdiel that sight endured not, where he stood
Among the mightiest, bent on highest deeds,
And thus his own undaunted heart explores :—

“ O Heaven ! that such resemblance of the Highest
Should yet remain, where faith and realty
Remain not ! Wherefore should not strength and might

There fail where virtue fails, or weakest prove
Where boldest, though to sight unconquerable?
His puissance, trusting in the Almighty's aid,
I mean to try, whose reason I have tried 120
Unsound and false ; nor is it aught but just
That he who in debate of truth hath won
Should win in arms, in both disputes alike
Victor. Though brutish that contest and foul,
When reason hath to deal with force, yet so
Most reason is that reason overcome.'

"So pondering, and from his armed peers
Forth-stepping opposite, half-way he met
His daring foe, at this prevention more
Incensed, and thus securely him defied :— 130

"Proud, art thou met? Thy hope was to have reached
The highth of thy aspiring unopposed—
The throne of God unguarded, and his side
Abandoned at the terror of thy power
Or potent tongue. Fool! not to think how vain
Against the Omnipotent to rise in arms ;
Who, out of smallest things, could without end
Have raised incessant armics to defeat
Thy folly ; or with solitary hand,
Reaching beyond all limit, at one blow, 140
Unaided could have finished thee, and whelmed
Thy legions under darkness! But thou seest
All are not of thy train ; there be who faith
Prefer, and piety to God, though then
To thee not visible when I alone
Seemed in thy world erroneous to dissent
From all : my Sect thou seest ; now learn too late
How few sometimes may know when thousands err.'

"Whom the grand Foe, with scornful eye askance,
Thus answered :—' Ill for thee, but in wished hour 150
Of my revenge, first sought for, thou return'st

From flight, seditious Angel, to receive
Thy merited reward, the first assay
Of this right hand provoked, since first that tongue
Inspired with contradiction, durst oppose
A third part of the Gods, in synod met
Their deities to assert : who, while they feel
Vigour divine within them, can allow
Omnipotence to none. But well thou com'st
Before thy fellows, ambitious to win 160
From me some plume, that thy success may show
Destruction to the rest. This pause between
(Unanswered lest thou boast) to let thee know.—
At first I thought that Liberty and Heaven
To heavenly souls had been all one ; but now
I see that most through sloth had rather serve,
Ministering Spirits, trained up in feast and song :
Such hast thou armed, the minstrelsy of heaven—
Servility with freedom to contend,
As both their deeds compared this day shall prove.' 170

“ To whom, in brief, thus Abdiel stern replied :—
' Apostate ! still thou err'st, nor end wilt find
Of erring, from the path of truth remote.
Unjustly thou depriv'st it with the name
Of servitude, to serve whom God ordains,
Or Nature : God and Nature bid the same,
When he who rules is worthiest, and excels
Them whom he governs. This is servitude—
To serve the unwise, or him who hath rebelled
Against his worthier, as thine now serve thee, 180
Thyself not free, but to thyself enthralled ;
Yet lewdly dar'st our ministering upbraid.
Reign thou in Hell, thy kingdom ; let me serve
In Heaven God ever blest, and his divine
Behests obey, worthiest to be obeyed.
Yet chains in Hell, not realms, expect : meanwhile,

From me returned, as erst thou saidst, from flight,
This greeting on thy impious crest receive.'

"So saying, a noble stroke he lifted high,
Which hung not, but so swift with tempest fell 190
On the proud crest of Satan that no sight,
Nor motion of swift thought, less could his shield,
Such ruin intercept. Ten paces huge
He back recoiled; the tenth on bended knee
His massy spear upstayed: as if, on earth,
Winds under ground, or waters forcing way,
Sidelong had pushed a mountain from his seat,
Half-sunk with all his pines. Amazement seized
The rebel Thrones, but greater rage, to see
Thus foiled their mightiest; ours joy filled, and shout,
Presage of victory, and fierce desire 201
Of battle: whereat Michaël bid sound
The Archangel trumpet. Through the vast of Heaven
It sounded, and the faithful armies rung
Hosannah to the Highest; nor stood at gaze
The adverse legions, nor less hideous joined
The horrid shock. Now storming fury rose,
And clamour such as heard in Heaven till now
Was never; arms on armour clashing brayed
Horrible discord, and the madding wheels 210
Of brazen chariots raged; dire was the noise
Of conflict; overhead the dismal hiss
Of fiery darts in flaming volleys flew,
And, flying, vaulted either host with fire.
So under fiery cope together rushed
Both battles main with ruinous assault
And inextinguishable rage. All Heaven
Resounded; and, had Earth been then, all Earth
Had to her centre shook. What wonder, when
Millions of fierce encountering Angels fought 220
On either side, the least of whom could wield

These elements, and arm him with the force
Of all their regions? How much more of power
Army against army numberless to raise
Dreadful combustion warring, and disturb,
Though not destroy, their happy native seat ;
Had not the Eternal King Omnipotent
From his strong hold of Heaven high overruled
And limited their might, though numbered such
As each divided legion might have seemed 230
A numerous host, in strength each armed hand
A legion ! Led in fight, yet leader seemed
Each warrior single as in chief ; expert
When to advance, or stand, or turn the sway
Of battle, open when, and when to close
The ridges of grim war. No thought of flight,
None of retreat, no unbecoming deed
That argued fear ; each on himself relied
As only in his arm the moment lay
Of victory. Deeds of eternal fame 240
Were done, but infinite ; for wide was spread
That war, and various : sometimes on firm ground
A standing fight ; then, soaring on main wing,
Tormented all the air ; all air seemed then
Conflicting fire. Long time in even scale
The battle hung ; till Satan, who that day
Prodigious power had shown, and met in arms
No equal, ranging through the dire attack
Of fighting Seraphim confused, at length
Saw where the sword of Michael smote, and felled 250
Squadrons at once : with huge two-handed sway
Brandished aloft, the horrid edge came down
Wide-wasting. Such destruction to withstand
He hasted, and opposed the rocky orb
Of tenfold adamant, his ample shield,
A vast circumference. At his approach

The great Archangel from his warlike toil
Surceased, and, glad, as hoping here to end
Intestine war in Heaven, the Arch-foe subdued,
Or captive dragged in chains, with hostile frown 260
And visage all inflamed, first thus began :—

“ ‘ Author of Evil, unknown till thy revolt,
Unnamed in Heaven, now plenteous as thou seest
These acts of hateful strife—hateful to all,
Though heaviest, by just measure, on thyself
And thy adherents—how hast thou disturbed
Heaven’s blessed peace, and into Nature brought
Misery, uncreated till the crime
Of thy rebellion ! how hast thou instilled
Thy malice into thousands, once upright 270
And faithful, now proved false ! But think not here
To trouble holy rest ; Heaven casts thee out
From all her confines ; Heaven, the seat of bliss,
Brooks not the works of violence and war.
Hence, then, and Evil go with thee along,
Thy offspring, to the place of Evil, Hell—
Thou and thy wicked crew ! there mingle broils !
Ere this avenging sword begin thy doom,
Or some more sudden vengeance, winged from God,
Precipitate thee with augmented pain.’ 280

“ So spake the Prince of Angels ; to whom thus
The Adversary :—‘ Nor think thou with wind
Of airy threats to awe whom yet with deeds
Thou canst not. Hast thou turned the least of these
To flight—or, if to fall, but that they rise
Unvanquished—easier to transact with me
That thou shouldst hope, imperious, and with threats
To chase me hence ? Err not that so shall end
The strife which thou call’st evil, but we style
The strife of glory ; which we mean to win, 290
Or turn this Heaven itself into the Hell

Thou fablest ; here, however, to dwell free,
If not to reign. Meanwhile, thy utmost force—
And join him named Almighty to thy aid—
I fly not, but have sought thee far and nigh.'

"They ended parle, and both addressed for fight
Unspeakable ; for who, though with the tongue
Of Angels, can relate, or to what things
Likened on Earth conspicuous, that may lift
Human imagination to such highth

300

Of godlike power ? for likest gods they seemed,
Stood they or moved, in stature, motion, arms,
Fit to decide the empire of great Heaven.
Now waved their fiery swords, and in the air
Made horrid circles : two broad suns their shields
Blazed opposite, while Expectation stood
In horror ; from each hand with speed retired,
Where erst was thickest fight, the Angelic throng,
And left large field, unsafe within the wind

Of such commotion : such as (to set forth
Great things by small) if, Nature's concord broke,
Among the constellations war were sprung,
Two planets, rushing from aspect malign
Of fiercest opposition, in mid sky

310

Should combat, and their jarring spheres confound.
Together both, with next to almighty arm
Uplifted imminent, one stroke they aimed
That might determine, and not need repeat
As not of power, at once ; nor odds appeared
In might or swift prevention. But the sword
Of Michael from the armoury of God

320

Was given him tempered so that neither keen
Nor solid might resist that edge : it met
The sword of Satan, with steep force to smite
Descending, and in half cut sheer ; nor stayed,
But, with swift wheel reverse, deep entering, shared

All his right side. Then Satan first knew pain,
And writhed him to and fro convolved ; so sore
The griding sword with discontinuous wound
Passed through him. But the ethereal substance closed,
Not long divisible ; and from the gash 331
A stream of nectarous humour issuing flowed
Sanguine, such as celestial Spirits may bleed,
And all his armour stained, erewhile so bright
Forthwith, on all sides, to his aid was run
By Angels many and strong, who interposed
Defence, while others bore him on their shields
Back to his chariot where it stood retired
From off the files of war : there they him laid
Gnashing for anguish, and despite, and shame 340
To find himself not matchless, and his pride
Humbled by such rebuke, so far beneath
His confidence to equal God in power.
Yet soon he healed ; for Spirits, that live throughout
Vital in every part—not, as frail Man,
In entrails, heart or head, liver or reins—
Cannot but by annihilating die ;
Nor in their liquid texture mortal wound
Receive, no more than can the fluid air :
All heart they live, all head, all eye, all ear, 350
All intellect, all sense ; and as they please
They limb themselves, and colour, shape, or size
Assume, as likes them best, condense or rare.

“ Meanwhile, in other parts, like deeds deserved
Memorial, where the might of Gabriel fought,
And with fierce ensigns pierced the deep array
Of Moloch, furious king, who him defied,
And at his chariot-wheels to drag him bound
Threatened, nor from the Holy One of Heaven
Refrained his tongue blasphemous, but anon, 360
Down cloven to the waist, with shattered arms

And uncouth pain fled bellowing. On each wing
Uriel and Raphael his vaunting foe,
Though huge and in a rock of diamond armed,
Vanquished—Andramelech and Asmadai,
Two potent Thrones, that to be less than Gods
Disdained, but meaner thoughts learned in their flight,
Mangled with ghastly wounds through plate and mail.
Nor stood unmindful Abdiel to annoy
The atheist crew, but with redoubled blow 370
Ariel, and Arioch, and the violence
Of Ramiel, scorched and blasted, overthrew.
I might relate of thousands, and their names
Eternize here on Earth ; but those elect
Angels, contented with their fame in Heaven,
Seek not the praise of men : the other sort,
In might though wondrous and in acts of war,
Nor of renown less eager, yet by doom
Cancelled from Heaven and sacred memory,
Nameless in dark oblivion let them dwell ! 380
For strength from truth divided, and from just,
Illaudable, nought merits but dispraise
And ignominy, yet to glory aspires,
Vain-glorious, and through infamy seeks fame :
Therefore eternal silence be their doom !
“ And now, their mightiest quelled, the battle swerved,
With many an inroad gored ; deformed rout
Entered, and foul disorder ; all the ground
With shivered armour strown, and on a heap
Chariot and charioteer lay overturned, 390
And fiery foaming steeds ; what stood recoiled,
O'er-wearied, through the faint Satanic host,
Defensive scarce, or with pale fear surprised—
Then first with fear surprised and sense of pain—
Fled ignominious, to such evil brought
By sin of disobedience, till that hour

Not liable to fear, or flight, or pain.
 Far otherwise the inviolable Saints
 In cubic phalanx firm advanced entire,
 Invulnerable, impenetrably armed ; 400
 Such high advantages their innocence
 Gave them above their foes—not to have sinned,
 Not to have disobeyed ; in fight they stood
 Unwearied, unobnoxious to be pained
 By wound, though from their place by violence moved.

“Now Night her course began, and, over Heaven
 Inducing darkness, grateful truce imposed,
 And silence on the odious din of war.
 Under her cloudy covert both retired,
 Victor and vanquished. On the foughten field 410
 Michaël and his Angels, prevalent
 Encamping, placed in guard their watches round,
 Cherubic waving fires : on the other part,
 Satan with his rebellious disappeared,
 Far in the dark dislodged, and, void of rest,
 His potentates to council called by night,
 And in the midst thus undismayed began :—

“‘O now in danger tried, now known in arms,
 Not to be overpowered, companions dear,
 Found worthy not of liberty alone— 420
 Too mean pretence—but, what we more affect,
 Honour, dominion, glory, and renown ;
 Who have sustained one day in doubtful fight
 (And, if one day, why not eternal days ?)
 What Heaven’s Lord had powerfulest to send
 Against us from about his throne, and judged
 Sufficient to subdue us to his will,
 But proves not so : then fallible, it seems,
 Of future we may deem him, though till now
 Omniscient thought ! True is, less firmly armed, 430
 Some disadvantage we endured, and pain—

Till now not known, but, known, as soon contemned ;
Since now we find this our empyreal form
Incapable of mortal injury,
Imperishable, and, though pierced with wound,
Soon closing, and by native vigour healed.
Of evil, then, so small as easy think
The remedy : perhaps more valid arms,
Weapons more violent, when next we meet,
May serve to better us and worse our foes, 440
Or equal what between us made the odds,
In nature none. If other hidden cause
Left them superior, while we can preserve
Unhurt our minds, and understanding sound,
Due search and consultation will disclose.'

" He sat ; and in the assembly next upstood
Nisroch, of P'ncipalities the prime.

As one he stood escaped from cruel fight
Sore toiled, his riven arms to havoc hewn,
And, cloudy in aspect, thus answering spake : 450

" ' Deliverer from new Lords, leader to free
Enjoyment of our right as Gods ! yet hard
For Gods, and too unequal work, we find
Against unequal arms to fight in pain,
Against unpained, impassive ; from which evil
Ruin must needs ensue. For what avails
Valour or strength, though matchless, quelled with pain,
Which all subdues, and makes remiss the hands
Of mightiest ? Sense of pleasure we may well
Spare out of life perhaps, and not repine, 460
But live content—which is the calmest life ;
But pain is perfect misery, the worst
Of evils, and, excessive, overturns
All patience. He who, therefore, can invent
With what more forcible we may offend
Our yet unwounded enemies, or arm

Ourselves with like defence, to me deserves
No less than for deliverance what we owe.'

"Whereto, with look composed, Satan replied :—
'Not uninvented that, which thou aright 470
Believ'st so main to our success, I bring.
Which of us who beholds the bright surface
Of this ethereous mould whereon we stand—
This continent of spacious Heaven, adorned
With plant, fruit, flower ambrosial, gems and gold—
Whose eye so superficially surveys
These things as not to mind from whence they grow
Deep under ground : materials dark and crude,
Of spiritous and fiery spume, till, touched
With Heaven's ray, and tempered, they shoot forth 480
So beauteous, opening to the ambient light ?
These in their dark nativity the Deep
Shall yield us, pregnant with infernal flame ;
Which, into hollow engines long and round
Thick-rammed, at the other bore with touch of fire
Dilated and infuriate, shall send forth
From far, with thundering noise, among our foes
Such implements of mischief as shall dash
To pieces and o'erwhelm whatever stands
Adverse, that they shall fear we have disarmed 490
The Thunderer of his only dreaded bolt.
Nor long shall be our labour ; yet ere dawn
Effect shall end our wish. Meanwhile revive ;
Abandon fear ; to strength and counsel joined
Think nothing hard, much less to be despaired.'

"He ended ; and his words their drooping cheer
Enlightened, and their languished hope revived.
The invention all admired, and each how he
To be the inventor missed ; so easy it seemed
Once found, which yet unfound most would have thought
Impossible ! Yet, haply, of thy race, 501

In future days, if malice should abound,
Some one, intent on mischief, or inspired
With devilish machination, might devise
Like instrument to plague the sons of men
For sin, on war and mutual slaughter bent.
Forthwith from council to the work they flew ;
None arguing stood ; innumerable hands
Were ready ; in a moment up they turned
Wide the celestial soil, and saw beneath 510
The originals of nature in their crude
Conception ; sulphurous and nitrous foam
They found, they mingled, and, with subtle art
Concocted and adusted, they reduced
To blackest grain, and into store conveyed.
Part hidden veins digged up (nor hath this Earth
Entrails unlike) of mineral and stone,
Whereof to found their engines and their balls
Of missive ruin ; part incentive reed
Provide, pernicious with one touch to fire. 520
So all ere day-spring, under conscious Night,
Secret they finished, and in order set,
With silent circumspection, unespied.

“ Now, when fair Morn orient in Heaven appeared,
Up rose the victor Angels, and to arms
The matin trumpet sung. In arms they stood
Of golden panoply, refulgent host,
Soon banded ; others from the dawning hills
Looked round, and scouts each coast light-armed scour,
Each quarter, to descry the distant foe, 530
Where lodged, or whither fled, or if for fight,
In motion or in halt. Him soon they met
Under spread ensigns moving nigh, in slow
But firm battalion : back with speediest sail
Zophiel, of Cherubim the swiftest wing,
Came flying, and in mid air aloud thus cried :—

“‘ Arm, Warriors, arm for fight ! The foe at hand,
Whom fled we thought, will save us long pursuit
This day ; fear not his flight ; so thick a cloud
He comes, and settled in his face I see 540
Sad resolution and secure. Let each
His adamantine coat gird well, and each
Fit well his helm, gripe fast his orbèd shield,
Borne even or high ; for this day will pour down,
If I conjecture aught, no drizzling shower,
But rattling storm of arrows barbed with fire.’

“ So warned he them, aware themselves, and soon
In order, quit of all impediment.
Instant, without disturb, they took alarm,
And onward move embattled : when, behold, 550
Not distant far, with heavy pace the foe
Approaching gross and huge, in hollow cube
Training his devilish enginry, impaled
On every side with shadowing squadrons deep,
To hide the fraud. At interview both stood
A while ; but suddenly at head appeared
Satan, and thus was heard commanding loud :—

“ ‘ Vanguard, to right and left the front unfold,
That all may see who hate us how we seek
Peace and composure, and with open breast 560
Stand ready to receive them, if they like
Our overture, and turn not back perverse :
But that I doubt. However, witness Heaven !
Heaven, witness thou anon ! while we discharge
Freely our part. Ye, who appointed stand,
Do as you have in charge, and briefly touch
What we propound, and loud that all may hear.’

“ So scoffing in ambiguous words, he scarce
Had ended, when to right and left the front
Divided, and to either flank retired ; 570
Which to our eyes discovered, new and strange,

A triple mounted row of pillars laid
On wheels (for like to pillars most they seemed,
Or hollowed bodies made of oak or fir,
With branches lopt, in wood or mountain felled),
Brass, iron, stony mould, had not their mouths
With hideous orifice gaped on us wide,
Portending hollow truce. At each, behind,
A Seraph stood, and in his hand a reed
Stood waving tipt with fire ; while we, suspense, 580
Collected stood within our thoughts amused.
Not long ! for sudden all at once their reeds
Put forth, and to a narrow vent applied
With nicest touch. Immediate in a flame,
But soon obscured with smoke, all Heaven appeared,
From those deep-throated engines belched, whose
 roar
Embowelled with outrageous noise the air,
And all her entrails tore, disgorging foul
Their devilish glut, chained thunderbolts and hail
(Of iron globes ; which, on the victor host 590
Levelled, with such impetuous fury smote,
That whom they hit none on their feet might stand,
Though standing else as rocks, but down they fell
By thousands, Angel on Archangel rolled,
The sooner for their arms. Unarmed, they might
Have easily, as Spirits, evaded swift
By quick contraction or remove ; but now
Foul dissipation followed, and forced rout ;
Nor served it to relax their serried files.
What should they do ? If on they rushed, repulse 600
Repeated, and indecent overthrow
Doubled, would render them yet more despised,
And to their foes a laughter—for in view
Stood ranked of Seraphim another row,
In posture to displode their second tire

Of thunder ; back defeated to return
They worse abhorred. Satan beheld their plight,
And to his mates thus in derision called :—

“ ‘O friends, why come not on these victors proud ?
Erewhile they fierce were coming ; and, when we, 610
To entertain them fair with open front
And breast (what could we more ?), propounded terms
Of composition, straight they changed their minds,
Flew off, and into strange vagaries fell,
As they would dance. Yet for a dance they seemed
Somewhat extravagant and wild ; perhaps
For joy of offered peace. But I suppose,
If our proposals once again were heard,
We should compel them to a quick result.’

“ To whom thus Belial, in like gamesome mood :—
‘ Leader, the terms we sent were terms of weight, 621
Of hard contents, and full of force urged home,
Such as we might perceive amused them all,
And stumbled many. Who receives them right
Had need from head to foot well understand ;
Not understood, this gift they have besides—
They show us when our foes walk not upright’

“ So they among themselves in pleasant vein
Stood scoffing, highthenced in their thoughts beyond
All doubt of victory ; Eternal Might 630
To match with their inventions they presumed
So easy, and of his thunder made a scorn,
And all his host derided, while they stood
A while in trouble. But they stood not long ;
Rage prompted them at length, and found them arms
Against such hellish mischief fit to oppose.
Forthwith (behold the excellence, the power,
Which God hath in his mighty Angels placed !)
Their arms away they threw, and to the hills
(For Earth hath this variety from Heaven 640

Of pleasure situate in hill and dale)
Light as the lightning-glimpse they ran, they flew ;
From their foundations, loosening to and fro,
They plucked the seated hills, with all their load,
Rocks, waters, woods, and, by the shaggy tops
Uplifting, bore them in their hands. Amaze,
Be sure, and terror, seized the rebel host,
When coming towards them so dread they saw
The bottom of the mountains upward turned,
Till on those cursed engines' triple row 650
They saw them whelmed, and all their confidence
Under the weight of mountains buried deep ;
Themselves invaded next, and on their heads
Main promontories flung, which in the air
Came shadowing, and oppressed whole legions armed.
Their armour helped their harm, crushed in and bruised,
Into their substance pent—which wrought them pain
Implacable, and many a dolorous groan,
Long struggling underneath, ere they could wind
Out of such prison, though Spirits of purest light, 660
Purest at first, now gross by sinning grown.
The rest, in imitation, to like arms
Betook them, and the neighbouring hills uptore ;
So hills amid the air encountered hills,
Hurled to and fro with jaculation dire,
That underground they fought in dismal shade :
Infernal noise ! war seemed a civil game
To this uproar ; horrid confusion heaped
Upon confusion rose. And now all Heaven
Had gone to wrack, with ruin overspread, 670
Had not the Almighty Father, where he sits
Shrined in his sanctuary of Heaven secure,
Consulting on the sum of things, foreseen
This tumult, and permitted all, advised,
That his great purpose he might so fulfil,

To honour his Anointed Son, avenged
Upon his enemies, and to declare
All power on him transferred. Whence to his Son,
The assessor of his throne, he thus began :—

“ ‘ Effulgence of my glory, Son beloved, 680
Son in whose face invisible is beheld
Visibly, what by Deity I am,
And in whose hand what by decree I do,
Second Omnipotence ! two days are passed,
Two days, as we compute the days of Heaven,
Since Michael and his Powers went forth to tame
These disobedient. Sore hath been their fight,
As likeliest was when two such foes met armed :
For to themselves I left them ; and thou know’st
Equal in their creation they were formed, 690
Save what sin hath impaired—which yet hath wrought
Insensibly, for I suspend their doom :
Whence in perpetual fight they needs must last
Endless, and no solution will be found.
War wearied hath performed what war can do,
And to disordered rage let loose the reins,
With mountains, as with weapons, armed ; which makes
Wild work in Heaven, and dangerous to the main.
Two days are, therefore, passed ; the third is thine :
For thee I have ordained it, and thus far 700
Have suffered, that the glory may be thine
Of ending this great war, since none but thou
Can end it. Into thee such virtue and grace
Immense I have transfused, that all may know
In Heaven and Hell thy power above compare,
And this perverse commotion governed thus,
To manifest thee worthiest to be Heir
Of all things—to be Heir, and to be King
By sacred unction, thy deservèd right.
Go, then, thou Mightiest, in thy Father’s might ; 710

Ascend my chariot ; guide the rapid wheels
That shake Heaven's basis ; bring forth all my war ,
My bow and thunder, my almighty arms,
Gird on, and sword upon thy puissant thigh ;
Pursue these Sons of Darkness, drive them out
From all Heaven's bounds into the utter Deep ,
There let them learn, as likes them, to despise
God, and Messiah his anointed King.'

" He said, and on his Son with rays direct
Shone full. He all his Father full expressed 720
Ineffably into his face received ;

And thus the Filial Godhead answering spake :—

" ' O Father, O Supreme of Heavenly Thrones,
First, Highest, Holiest, Best, thou always seek'st
To glorify thy Son ; I always thee,
As is most just. This I my glory account,
My exaltation, and my whole delight,
That thou in me, well pleased, declar'st thy will
Fulfilled, which to fulfil is all my bliss.

Sceptre and power, thy giving, I assume, 730
And gladlier shall resign when in the end
Thou shalt be all in all, and I in thee
For ever, and in me all whom thou lov'st.
But whom thou hat'st I hate, and can put on
Thy terrors, as I put thy mildness on,
Image of thee in all things : and shall soon,
Armed with thy might, rid Heaven of these rebelled,
To their prepared ill mansion driven down,
To chains of darkness and the undying worm,
That from thy just obedience could revolt, 740
Whom to obey is happiness entire.

Then shall thy Saints, unmixed and from the impure
Far separate, circling thy holy Mount,
Unfeign'd halleluiahs to thee sing,
Hymns of high praise, and I among them chief.'

“ So said, he, o’er his sceptre bowing, rose
From the right hand of Glory where he sat ;
And the third sacred morn began to shine,
Dawning through Heaven. Forth rushed with whirl-
wind sound

The chariot of Paternal Deity, 750

Flashing thick flames, wheel within wheel ; undrawn,
Itself instinct with spirit, but convoyed
By four cherubic Shapes. Four faces each
Had wondrous ; as with stars, their bodies all
And wings were set with eyes ; with eyes the wheels
Of beryl, and careering fires between ;
Over their heads a crystal firmament,
Whereon a sapphire throne, inlaid with pure
Amber and colours of the showery arch.

He, in celestial panoply all armed 760

Of radiant Urim, work divinely wrought,
Ascended ; at his right hand Victory
Sat eagle-winged ; beside him hung his bow,
And quiver, with three-bolted thunder stored ;
And from about him fierce effusion rolled
Of smoke and bickering flame and sparkles dire.
Attended with ten thousand thousand Saints,
He onward came ; far off his coming shone ;
And twenty thousand (I their number heard)
Chariots of God, half on each hand, were seen. 770

He on the wings of Cherub rode sublime
On the crystalline sky, in sapphire throned—
Illustrious far and wide, but by his own
First seen. Them unexpected joy surprised
When the great ensign of Messiah blazed
Aloft, by Angels borne, his sign in Heaven ;
Under whose conduct Michael soon reduced
His army, circumfused on either wing,
Under their Head embodied all in one.

Before him Power Divine his way prepared ; 780
At his command the uprooted hills retired
Each to his place ; they heard his voice, and went
Obsequious ; Heaven his wonted face renewed,
And with fresh flowerets hill and valley smiled.

“ This saw his hapless foes, but stood obdured,
And to rebellious fight rallied their Powers,
Insensate, hope conceiving from despair.
• In Heavenly Spirits could such perverseness dwell ?
But to convince the proud what signs avail,
Or wonders move the obdurate to relent ? 790
They, hardened more by what might most reclaim,
Grieving to see his glory, at the sight
Took envy, and, aspiring to his highth,
Stood re-embattled fierce, by force or fraud
Weening to prosper, and at length prevail
Against God and Messiah, or to fall
In universal ruin last ; and now
To final battle drew, disdaining flight,
Or faint retreat : when the great Son of God
To all his host on either hand thus spake :— 800

“ Stand still in bright array, ye Saints ; here stand,
Ye Angels armed ; this day from battle rest.
Faithful hath been your warfare, and of God
Accepted, fearless in his righteous cause ;
And, as ye have received, so have ye done,
Invincibly. But of this cursèd crew
The punishment to other hand belongs ;
Vengeance is his, or whose he sole appoints.
Number to this day's work is not ordained,
Nor multitude ; stand only and behold 810
God's indignation on these godless poured
By me. Not you, but me, they have despised,
Yet envied ; against me is all their rage,
Because the Father, to whom in Heaven supreme

Kingdom and power and glory appertains,
Hath honoured me, according to his will.
Therefore to me their doom he hath assigned,
That they may have their wish, to try with me
In battle which the stronger proves—they all,
Or I alone against them ; since by strength 820
They measure all, of other excellence
Not emulous, nor care who them excels ;
Nor other strife with them do I voutsafe.'

" So spake the Son, and into terror changed
His countenance, too severe to be beheld,
And full of wrath bent on his enemies.
At once the Four spread out their starry wings
With dreadful shade contiguous, and the orbs
Of his fierce chariot rolled, as with the sound
Of torrent floods, or of a numerous host. 830
He on his impious foes right onward drove,
Gloomy as Night. Under his burning wheels
The steadfast Empyrean shook throughout,
All but the throne itself of God. Full soon
Among them he arrived, in his right hand
Grasping ten thousand thunders, which he sent
Before him, such as in their souls infix'd
Plagues. They, astonished, all resistance lost,
All courage ; down their idle weapons dropt ;
O'er shields, and helms, and helmèd heads he rode 840
Of Thrones and mighty Seraphim prostrate,
That wished the mountains now might be again
Thrown on them, as a shelter from his ire.
Nor less on either side tempestuous fell
His arrows, from the fourfold-visaged Four,
Distinct with eyes, and from the living wheels,
Distinct alike with multitude of eyes ;
One spirit in them ruled, and every eye
Glared lightning, and shot forth pernicious fire

- Among the accursed, that withered all their strength,
And of their wonted vigour left them drained, 851
Exhausted, spiritless, afflicted, fallen.
Yet half his strength he put not forth, but checked
His thunder in mid-volley ; for he meant
Not to destroy, but root them out of Heaven.
- The overthrown he raised, and, as a herd
Of goats or timorous flock together thronged,
Drove them before him thunderstruck, pursued
With terrors and with furies to the bounds
And crystal wall of Heaven ; which, opening wide, 860
Rolled inward, and a spacious gap disclosed
Into the wasteful Deep. The monstrous sight
Strook them with horror backward ; but far worse
Urged them behind : headlong themselves they threw
Down from the verge of Heaven : eternal wrath
Burnt after them to the bottomless pit.

“ Hell heard the unsufferable noise ; Hell saw
Heaven ruining from Heaven, and would have fled
Affrighted ; but strict Fate had cast too deep
Her dark foundations, and too fast had bound 870
Nine days they fell ; confounded Chaos roared,
And felt tenfold confusion in their fall
Through his wild Anarchy ; so huge a rout
Encumbered him with ruin. Hell at last,
Yawning, received them whole, and on them closed—
Hell, their fit habitation, fraught with fire
Unquenchable, the house of woe and pain.
Disburdened Heaven rejoiced, and soon repaired
Her mural breach, returning whence it rolled.
Sole victor, from the expulsion of his foes 880
Messiah his triumphal chariot turned.
To meet him all his Saints, who silent stood
Eye-witnesses of his almighty acts,
With jubilee advanced ; and, as they went,

Shaded with branching palm, each order bright
Sung triumph, and him sung victorious King,
Son, Heir, and Lord, to him dominion given,
Worthiest to reign. He celebrated rode,
Triumphant through mid Heaven, into the courts
And temple of his mighty Father throned 890
On high ; who into glory him received,
Where now he sits at the right hand of bliss.

“ Thus, measuring things in Heaven by things on
Earth,

At thy request, and that thou may'st beware
By what is past, to thee I have revealed
What might have else to human race been hid—
The discord which befell, and war in Heaven
Among the Angelic Powers, and the deep fall
Of those too high aspiring who rebelled
With Satan : he who envies now thy state, 900
Who now is plotting how he may seduce
Thee also from obedience, that, with him
Bereaved of happiness, thou may'st partake
His punishment, eternal misery ;
Which would be all his solace and revenge,
As a despite done against the Most High,
Thee once to gain companion of his woe,
But listen not to his temptations ; warn
Thy weaker ; let it profit thee to have heard,
By terrible example, the reward 910
Of disobedience. Firm they might have stood,
Yet fell. Remember, and fear to transgress.”

PARADISE LOST

BOOK VII

THE ARGUMENT

Raphael, at the request of Adam, relates how and wherefore this World was first created:—that God, after the expelling of Satan and his Angels out of Heaven, declared his pleasure to create another World, and other creatures to dwell therein; sends his Son with glory, and attendance of Angels, to perform the work of creation in six days: the Angels celebrate with hymns the performance thereof, and his reascension into Heaven.

DESCEND from Heaven, Urania, by that name
If rightly thou art called, whose voice divine
Following, above the Olympian hill I soar,
Above the flight of Pegasean wing!
The meaning, not the name, I call; for thou
Nor of the Muses nine, nor on the top
Of old Olympus dwell'st; but, heavenly-born,
Before the hills appeared or fountain flowed,
Thou with Eternal Wisdom didst converse,
Wisdom thy sister, and with her didst play 10
In presence of the Almighty Father, pleased
With thy celestial song. Up led by thee,
Into the Heaven of Heavens I have presumed,
An earthly guest, and drawn empyreal air,
Thy tempering. With like safety guided down,
Return me to my native element;
Lest, from this flying steed unreined (as once
Bellerophon, though from a lower clime)

Dismounted, on the Aleian field I fall,
Erroneous there to wander and forlorn. 20
Half yet remains unsung, but narrower bound
Within the visible Diurnal Sphere.
Standing on Earth, not rapt above the pole,
More safe I sing with mortal voice, unchanged
To hoarse or mute, though fallen on evil days,
On evil days though fallen, and evil tongues,
In darkness, and with dangers compassed round,
And solitude ; yet not alone, while thou
Visit'st my slumbers nightly, or when Morn
Purples the East. Still govern thou my song, 30
Urania, and fit audience find, though few.
But drive far off the barbarous dissonance
Of Bacchus and his revellers, the race
Of that wild rout that tore the Thracian bard
In Rhodope, where woods and rocks had ears
To rapture, till the savage clamour drowned
Both harp and voice ; nor could the Muse defend
Her son. So fail not thou who thee implores ;
For thou art heavenly, she an empty dream.
Say, Goddess, what ensued when Raphael, 40
The affable Archangel, had forewarned
Adam, by dire example, to beware
Apostasy, by what befell in Heaven
To those apostates, lest the like befall
In Paradise to Adam or his race,
Charged not to touch the interdicted Tree,
If they transgress, and slight that sole command,
So easily obeyed amid the choice
Of all tastes else to please their appetite,
Though wandering. He, with his consorted Eve, 50
The story heard attentive, and was filled
With admiration and deep muse, to hear
Of things so high and strange—things to their thought

So unimaginable as hate in Heaven,
And war so near the peace of God in bliss,
With such confusion ; but the evil, soon
Driven back, redounded as a flood on those
From whom it sprung, impossible to mix
With blessedness. Whence Adam soon repealed
The doubts that in his heart arose ; and, now 60
Led on, yet sinless, with desire to know
What nearer might concern him—how this World
Of heaven and earth conspicuous first began ;
When, and whereof, created ; for what cause ;
What within Eden, or without, was done
Before his memory—as one whose drouth,
Yet scarce allayed, still eyes the current stream,
Whose liquid murmur heard new thirst excites,
Proceeded thus to ask his Heavenly Guest :—
“ Great things, and full of wonder in our ears, 70
Far differing from this World, thou hast revealed.
Divine Interpreter ! by favour sent
Down from the Empyrean to forewarn
Us timely of what might else have been our loss,
Unknown, which human knowledge could not reach ;
For which to the infinitely Good we owe
Immortal thanks, and his admonishment
Receive with solemn purpose to observe
Immutably his sovran will, the end
Of what we are. But, since thou hast voutsafed 80
Gently, for our instruction, to impart
Things above Earthly thought, which yet concerned
Our knowing, as to highest Wisdom seemed,
Deign to descend now lower, and relate
What may no less perhaps avail us known—
How first began this Heaven which we behold
Distant so high, with moving fires adorned
Innumerable ; and this which yields or fills

All space, the ambient Air, wide interfused,
Embracing round this florid Earth ; what cause 90
Moved the Creator, in his holy rest
Through all eternity, so late to build
In Chaos ; and, the work begun, how soon
Absolved : if unforbid thou may'st unfold
What we not to explore the secrets ask
Of his eternal empire, but the more
To magnify his works the more we know.
And the great Light of Day yet wants to run
Much of his race, though steep. Suspense in heaven
Held by thy voice, thy potent voice he hears, 100
And longer will delay, to hear thee tell
His generation, and the rising birth
Of Nature from the unapparent Deep :
Or, if the Star of Evening and the Moon
Haste to thy audience, Night with her will bring
Silence, and Sleep listening to thee will watch ;
Or we can bid his absence till thy song
End, and dismiss thee ere the morning shine."

Thus Adam his illustrious guest besought ;
And thus the godlike Angel answered mild :— 110

" This also thy request, with caution asked,
Obtain ; though to recount almighty works
What words or tongue of Seraph can suffice,
Or heart of man suffice to comprehend ?
Yet what thou canst attain, which best may serve
To glorify the Maker, and infer
Thee also happier, shall not be withheld
Thy hearing. Such commission from above
I have received, to answer thy desire
Of knowledge within bounds ; beyond abstain 120
To ask, nor let thine own inventions hope
Things not revealed, which the invisible King,
Only omniscient, hath suppressed in night,

To none communicable in Earth or Heaven.
Enough is left besides to search and know ;
But Knowledge is as food, and needs no less
Her temperance over appetite, to know
In measure what the mind may well contain ;
Oppresses else with surfeit, and soon turns
Wisdom to folly, as nourishment to wind.

130

“ Know then that, after Lucifer from Heaven
(So call him, brighter once amidst the host
Of Angels than that star the stars among)
Fell with his flaming legions through the Deep
Into his place, and the great Son returned
Victorious with his Saints, the Omnipotent
Eternal Father from his throne beheld
Their multitude, and to his Son thus spake :—

“ ‘ At least our envious foe hath failed, who thought
All like himself rebellious , by whose aid
This inaccessible high strength, the seat
Of Deity supreme, us dispossessed,
He trusted to have seized, and into fraud
Drew many whom their place knows here no more.
Yet far the greater part have kept, I see,
Their station ; Heaven, yet populous, retains
Number sufficient to possess her realms,
Though wide, and this high temple to frequent
With ministeries due and solemn rites.
But, lest his heart exalt him in the harm
Already done, to have dispeopled Heaven—
My damage fondly deemed,—I can repair
That detriment, if such it be to lose
Self-lost, and in a moment will create
Another world ; out of one man a race
Of men innumerable, there to dwell,
Not here, till, by degrees of merit raised,
They open to themselves at length the way

140

150

Up hither, under long obedience tried,
And Earth be changed to Heaven, and Heaven to
Earth,

160

One kingdom, joy and union without end.
Meanwhile inhabit lax, ye Powers of Heaven ;
And thou, my Word, begotten Son, by thee
This I perform ; speak thou, and be it done !
My overshadowing Spirit and might with thee
I send along ; ride forth, and bid the Deep
Within appointed bounds be heaven and earth.
Boundless the Deep, because I am who fill
Infinitude ; nor vacuous the space,
Though I, uncircumscribed, myself retire,
And put not forth my goodness, which is free
To act or not. Necessity and Chance
Approach not me, and what I will is Fate.'

170

"So spake the Almighty ; and to what he spake
His Word, the Filial Godhead, gave effect.
Immediate are the acts of God, more swift
Than time or motion, but to human ears
Cannot without process of speech be told,
So told as earthly notion can receive.

Great triumph and rejoicing was in Heaven
When such was heard declared the Almighty's will.
Glory they sung to the Most High, good-will
To future men, and in their dwellings peace—
Glory to Him whose just avenging ire
Had driven out the ungodly from his sight
And the habitations of the just ; to Him
Glory and praise whose wisdom had ordained
Good out of evil to create—instead
Of Spirits malign, a better race to bring
Into their vacant room, and thence diffuse
His good to worlds and ages infinite.

180

190

"So sang the Hierarchies. Meanwhile the Son

On his great expedition now appeared,
Girt with omnipotence, with radiance crowned
Of majesty divine, sapience and love
Immense ; and all his Father in him shone.
About his chariot numberless were poured
Cherub and Seraph, Potentates and Thrones,
And Virtues, wingèd Spirits, and chariots winged
From the armoury of God, where stand of old 200
Myriads, between two brazen mountains lodged
Against a solemn day, harnessed at hand,
Celestial equipage ; and now came forth
Spontaneous, for within them Spirit lived,
Attendant on their Lord. Heaven opened wide
Her ever-during gates, harmonious sound
On golden hinges moving, to let forth
The King of Glory, in his powerful Word
And Spirit coming to create new worlds.
On Heavenly ground they stood, and from the shore
They viewed the vast immeasurable Abyss, 211
Outrageous as a sea, dark, wasteful, wild,
Up from the bottom turned by furious winds
And surging waves, as mountains to assault
Heaven's highth, and with the centre mix the pole.
“ Silence, ye troubled waves, and, thou Deep, peace ! ”
Said then the omnific Word : ‘ your discord end ! ’
Nor stayed ; but, on the wings of Cherubim
Uplifted, in paternal glory rode
Far into Chaos and the World unborn ; 220
For Chaos heard his voice. Him all his train
Followed in bright procession, to behold
Creation, and the wonders of his might.
Then stayed the fervid wheels, and in his hand
He took the golden compasses, prepared
In God's eternal store, to circumscribe
This Universe, and all created things.

One foot he centred, and the other turned
Round through the vast profundity obscure,
And said, 'Thus far extend, thus far thy bounds ; 230
This be thy just circumference, O World !'
Thus God the Heaven created, thus the Earth,
Matter unformed and void. Darkness profound
Covered the Abyss ; but on the watery calm
His brooding wings the Spirit of God outspread,
And vital virtue infused, and vital warmth,
Throughout the fluid mass, but downward purged
The black, tartareous, cold, infernal dregs,
Adverse to life ; then founded, then conglobed,
Like things to like, the rest to several place 240
Disparted, and between spun out the Air,
And Earth, self-balanced, on her centre hung.

"Let there be Light!" said God ; and forthwith Light
Ethereal, first of things, quintessence pure,
Sprung from the Deep, and from her native East
To journey through the aery gloom began,
Sphered in a radiant cloud—for yet the Sun
Was not ; she in a cloudy tabernacle
Sojourned the while. God saw the Light was good ;
And light from darkness by the hemisphere 250
Divided : Light the Day, and Darkness Night,
He named. Thus was the first Day even and morn ;
Nor passed uncelebrated, nor unsung
By the celestial quires, when orient light
Exhaling first from darkness they beheld,
Birth-day of Heaven and Earth. With joy and shout
The hollow universal orb they filled,
And touched their golden harps, and hymning praised
God and his works ; Creator him they sung,
Both when first evening was, and when first morn. 260

"Again God said, 'Let there be firmament
Amid the waters, and let it divide

The waters from the waters !' And God made
The firmament, expanse of liquid, pure,
Transparent, elemental air, diffused
In circuit to the uttermost convex
Of this great round—partition firm and sure,
The waters underneath from those above
Dividing ; for as Earth, so he the World
Built on circumfluous waters calm, in wide
Crystalline ocean, and the loud misrule
Of Chaos far removed, lest fierce extremes
Contiguous might distemper the whole frame :
And Heaven he named the Firmament. So even
And morning chorus sung the second Day.

270

“The Earth was formed, but, in the womb as yet
Of waters, embryo immature, involved,
Appeared not ; over all the face of Earth
Main ocean flowed, not idle, but, with warm
Prolific humour softening all her globe,
Fermented the great mother to conceive,
Sate with genial moisture ; when God said,
‘ Be gathered now, ye waters under heaven,
Into one place, and let dry land appear !’
Immediately the mountains huge appear
Emergent, and their broad bare backs upheave
Into the clouds ; their tops ascend the sky.
So high as heaved the tumid hills, so low
Down sunk a hollow bottom broad and deep,
Capacious bed of waters. Thither they
Hasted with glad precipitance, uprolled,
As drops on dust conglobing, from the dry :
Part rise in crystal wall, or ridge direct,
For haste ; such flight the great command impressed
On the swift floods. As armies at the call
Of trumpet (for of armies thou hast heard)
Troop to their standard, so the watery throng,

280

290

Wave rolling after wave, where way they found—
If steep, with torrent rapture, if through plain,
Soft-ebbing ; nor withstood them rock or hill ; 300
But they, or underground, or circuit wide
With serpent error wandering, found their way,
And on the washy ooze deep channels wore :
Easy, ere God had bid the ground be dry,
All but within those banks where rivers now
Stream, and perpetual draw their humid train.
The dry land Earth; and the great receptacle
Of congregated waters he called Seas ;
And saw that it was good, and said, ' Let the Earth
Put forth the verdant grass, herb yielding seed, 310
And fruit-tree yielding fruit after her kind,
Whose seed is in herself upon the Earth !'
He scarce had said when the bare Earth, till then
Desert and bare, unsightly, unadorned,
Brought forth the tender grass, whose verdure clad
Her universal face with pleasant green ;
Then herbs of every leaf, that sudden flowered,
Opening their various colours, and made gay
Her bosom, smelling sweet ; and, these scarce blown,
Forth flourished thick the clustering vine, forth crept
The smelling gourd, up stood the corny reed 321
Embattled in her field : add the humble shrub,
And bush with frizzled hair implicit : last
Rose, as in dance, the stately trees, and spread
Their branches hung with copious fruit, or gemmed
Their blossoms. With high woods the hills were crowned,
With tufts the valleys and each fountain-side,
With borders long the rivers, that Earth now
Seemed like to Heaven, a seat where gods might dwell,
Or wander with delight, and love to haunt 330
Her sacred shades ; though God had yet not rained
Upon the Earth, and man to till the ground

None was, but from the Earth a dewy mist
Went up and watered all the ground, and each
Plant of the field, which ere it was in the Earth
God made, and every herb before it grew
On the green stem. God saw that it was good ;
So even and morn recorded the third Day.

“ Again the Almighty spake, ‘ Let there be Lights
High in the expanse of Heaven, to divide 340
The Day from Night ; and let them be for signs,
For seasons, and for days, and circling years ;
And let them be for lights, as I ordain
Their office in the firmament of heaven,
To give light on the Earth !’ and it was so.
And God made two great Lights, great for their use
To Man, the greater to have rule by day,
The less by night, altern ; and made the Stars,
And set them in the firmament of Heaven
To illuminate the Earth, and rule the day 350
In their vicissitude, and rule the night,
And light from darkness to divide. God saw,
Surveying his great work, that it was good :
For, of celestial bodies, first the Sun
A mighty sphere he framed, unlightsome first,
Though of ethereal mould ; then formed the Moon
Globose, and every magnitude of Stars,
And sowed with stars the heaven thick as a field.
Of Light by far the greater part he took,
Transplanted from her cloudy shrine, and placed 360
In the Sun’s orb, made porous to receive
And drink the liquid light, firm to retain
Her gathered beams, great palace now of Light.
Hither, as to their fountain, other stars
Repairing in their golden urns draw light,
And hence the morning planet gilds her horns ;
By tincture or reflection they augment

Their small peculiar, though, from human sight
So far remote, with diminution seen.
First in his east the glorious lamp was seen, 370
Regent of day, and all the horizon round
Invested with bright rays, jocund to run
His longitude through heaven's high road ; the grey
Dawn, and the Pleiades, before him danced,
Shedding sweet influence. Less bright the Moon,
But opposite in levelled west, was set,
His mirror, with full face borrowing her light
From him ; for other light she needed none
In that aspect, and still that distance keeps
Till night ; then in the east her turn she shines, 380
Revolved on heaven's great axle, and her reign
With thousand lesser lights dividual holds,
With thousand thousand stars, that then appeared
Spangling the hemisphere. Then first adorned
With their bright luminaries, that set and rose,
Glad evening and glad morn crowned the fourth Day.

“And God said, ‘Let the waters generate
Reptile with spawn abundant, living soul ;
And let Fowl fly above the earth, with wings
Displayed on the open firmament of heaven !’ 390
And God created the great whales, and each
Soul living, each that crept, which plenteously
The waters generated by their kinds,
And every bird of wing after his kind,
And saw that it was good, and blessed them, saying,
‘Be fruitful, multiply, and, in the seas,
And lakes, and running streams, the waters fill ;
And let the fowl be multiplied on the earth !’
Forthwith the sounds and seas, each creek and bay,
With fry innumerable swarm, and shoals 400
Of fish that, with their fins and shining scales,
Glide under the green wave in sculls that oft

Bank the mid-sea. Part, single or with mate,
Graze the sea-weed, their pasture, and through groves
Of coral stray, or, sporting with quick glance,
Show to the sun their waved coats dropt with gold,
Or, in their pearly shells at ease, attend
Moist nutriment, or under rocks their food
In jointed armour watch ; on smooth the seal
And bended dolphins play : part, huge of bulk, 410
Wallowing unwieldy, enormous in their gait,
Tempest the ocean. There leviathan,
Hugest of living creatures, on the deep
Stretched like a promontory, sleeps or swims,
And seems a moving land, and at his gills
Draws in, and at his trunk spouts out, a sea.
Meanwhile the tepid caves, and fens, and shores,
Their brood as numerous hatch from the egg, that soon,
Bursting with kindly rupture, forth disclosed
Their callow young ; but feathered soon and fledge 420
They summed their pens, and, soaring the air sublime,
With clang despised the ground, under a cloud
In prospect. There the eagle and the stork
On cliffs and cedar-tops their eyries build.
Part loosely wing the region ; part, more wise,
In common, ranged in figure, wedge their way,
Intelligent of seasons, and set forth
Their aery caravan, high over seas
Flying, and over lands, with mutual wing
Easing their flight : so steers the prudent crane 430
Her annual voyage, borne on winds : the air
Floats as they pass, fanned with unnumbered plumes.
From branch to branch the smaller birds with song
Solaced the woods, and spread their painted wings,
Till even ; nor then the solemn nightingale
Ceased warbling, but all night tuned her soft lays.
Others, on silver lakes and rivers, bathed

Their downy breast ; the swan, with archèd neck
Between her white wings mantling proudly, rows
Her state with oary feet ; yet oft they quit 440
The dank, and, rising on stiff pennons, tower
The mid aerial sky. Others on ground
Walked firm—the crested cock, whose clarion sounds
The silent hours, and the other, whose gay train
Adorns him, coloured with the florid hue
Of rainbows and starry eyes. The waters thus
With Fish replenished, and the air with Fowl,
Evening and morn solemnized the fifth Day.

“The sixth, and of Creation last, arose
With evening harps and matin ; when God said, 450
‘Let the Earth bring forth soul living in her kind,
Cattle, and creeping things, and beast of the earth,
Each in their kind !’ The Earth obeyed, and, straight
Opening her fertile womb, teemed at a birth
Innumerable living creatures, perfect forms,
Limbed and full-grown. Out of the ground up rose,
As from his lair, the wild beast, where he wons
In forest wild, in thicket, brake, or den—
Among the trees in pairs they rose, they walked ;
The cattle in the fields and meadows green : 460
Those rare and solitary, these in flocks
Pasturing at once and in broad herds, upsprung.
The grassy clods now calved ; now half appeared
The tawny lion, pawing to get free
His hinder parts—then springs, as broke from bonds,
And rampant shakes his brinded mane ; the ounce,
The libbard, and the tiger, as the mole
Rising, the crumbled earth above them threw
In hillocks ; the swift stag from underground
Bore up his branching head ; scarce from his mould
Behemoth, biggest born of earth, upheaved 471
His vastness ; fleeced the flocks and bleating rose,

As plants ; ambiguous between sea and land,
The river-horse and scaly crocodile.
At once came forth whatever creeps the ground,
Insect or worm. Those waved their limber fans
For wings, and smallest lineaments exact
In all the liveries decked of summer's pride,
With spots of gold and purple, azure and green ;
These as a line their long dimension drew, 480
Streaking the ground with sinuous trace : not all
Minims of nature ; some of serpent kind,
Wondrous in length and corpulence, involved
Their snaky folds, and added wings. First crept
The parsimonious emmet, provident
Of future, in small room large heart enclosed—
Pattern of just equality perhaps
Hereafter,—joined in her popular tribes
Of commonalty. Swarming next appeared
The female bee, that feeds her husband drone 490
Deliciously, and builds her waxen cells
With honey stored. The rest are numberless,
And thou their natures know'st, and gav'st them names,
Needless to thee repeated ; nor unknown
The serpent, subtlest beast of all the field,
Of huge extent sometimes, with brazen eyes
And hairy mane terrific, though to thee
Not noxious, but obedient at thy call.

“ Now Heaven in all her glory shone, and rolled
Her motions, as the great First Mover's hand 500
First wheeled their course ; Earth, in her rich attire
Consummate, lovely smiled ; Air, Water, Earth,
By fowl, fish, beast, was flown, was swum, was walked,
Frequent ; and of the sixth Day yet remained.
There wanted yet the master-work, the end
Of all yet done—a creature who, not prone
And brute as other creatures, but endued

With sanctity of reason, might erect
His stature, and upright with front serene
Govern the rest, self-knowing, and from thence 510
Magnanimous to correspond with Heaven,
But grateful to acknowledge whence his good
Descends ; thither with heart, and voice, and eyes
Directed in devotion, to adore
And worship God Supreme, who made him chief
Of all his works. Therefore the Omnipotent
Eternal Father (for where is not He
Present ?) thus to his Son audibly spake :—
' Let us make now Man in our image, Man
In our similitude, and let them rule 520
Over the fish and fowl of sea and air,
Beast of the field, and over all the earth,
And every creeping thing that creeps the ground !'
This said, he formed thee, Adam, thee, O Man,
Dust of the ground, and in thy nostrils breathed
The breath of life ; in his own image he
Created thee, in the image of God
Express, and thou becam'st a living soul.
Male he created thee, but thy consort
Female, for race ; then blessed mankind, and said, 530
' Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the Earth ;
Subdue it, and throughout dominion hold
Over fish of the sea, and fowl of the air,
And every living thing that moves on the Earth !'
Wherever thus created—for no place
Is yet distinct by name—thence, as thou know'st,
He brought thee into this delicious grove,
This Garden, planted with the trees of God,
Delectable both to behold and taste,
And freely all their pleasant fruit for food 540
Gave thee. All sorts are here that all the earth yields,
Variety without end ; but of the tree

Which tasted works knowledge of good and evil
Thou may'st not ; in the day thou eat'st, thou diest.
Death is the penalty imposed ; beware,
And govern well thy appetite, lest Sin
Surprise thee, and her black attendant, Death.

“ Here finished He, and all that he had made
Viewed, and, behold ! all was entirely good.
So even and morn accomplished the sixth Day ; 550
Yet not till the Creator, from his work
Desisting, though unwearied, up returned,
Up to the Heaven of Heavens, his high abode,
Thence to behold this new-created World,
The addition of his empire, how it showed
In prospect from his throne, how good, how fair,
Answering his great idea. Up he rode,
Followed with acclamation, and the sound
Symphonious of ten thousand harps, that tuned
Angelic harmonics. The Earth, the Air 560
Resounded (thou remember'st, for thou heard'st),
The heavens and all the constellations rung,
The planets in their stations listening stood,
While the bright pomp ascended jubilant.
' Open, ye everlasting gates ! ' they sung ;
' Open, ye Heavens, your living doors ! let in
The great Creator, from his work returned
Magnificent, his six days' work, a World !
Open, and henceforth oft ; for God will deign
To visit oft the dwellings of just men 570
Delighted, and with frequent intercourse
Thither will send his wingèd messengers
On errands of supernal grace.' So sung
The glorious train ascending. He through Heaven,
That opened wide her blazing portals, led
To God's eternal house direct the way—
A broad and ample road, whose dust is gold,

And pavement stars, as stars to thee appear
Seen in the Galaxy, that milky way
Which nightly as a circling zone thou seest 580
Powdered with stars. And now on Earth the seventh
Evening arose in Eden—for the sun
Was set, and twilight from the east came on,
Forerunning night—when at the holy mount
Of Heaven's high-seated top, the imperial throne
Of Godhead, fixed for ever firm and sure,
The Filial Power arrived, and sat him down
With his great Father ; for He also went
Invisible, yet stayed (such privilege
Hath Omnipresence) and the work ordained, 590
Author and end of all things, and, from work
Now resting, blessed and hallowed the seventh Day,
As resting on that day from all his work ;
But not in silence holy kept : the harp
Had work, and rested not ; the solemn pipe
And dulcimer, all organs of sweet stop,
All sounds on fret by string or golden wire,
Tempered soft tunings, intermixed with voice
Choral or unison ; of incense clouds,
Fuming from golden censers, hid the Mount. 600
Creation and the Six Days' acts they sung :—
' Great are thy works, Jehovah ! infinite
Thy power ! what thought can measure thee, or tongue
Relate thee—greater now in thy return
Than from the Giant-angels ? Thee that day
Thy thunders magnified ; but to create
Is greater than created to destroy.
Who can impair thee, mighty King, or bound
Thy empire ? Easily the proud attempt
Of Spirits apostate, and their counsels vain, 610
Thou hast repelled, while impiously they thought
Thee to diminish, and from thee withdraw

The number of thy worshipers. Who seeks
To lessen thee, against his purpose, serves
To manifest the more thy might ; his evil
Thou usest, and from thence creat'st more good
Witness this new-made World, another Heaven
From Heaven-gate not far, founded in view
On the clear hyaline, the glassy sea ;
Of amplitude almost immense, with stars 620
Numerous, and every star perhaps a world
Of destined habitation—but thou know'st
Their seasons ; among these the seat of men,
Earth, with her nether ocean circumfused,
Their pleasant dwelling-place. Thrice happy men,
And sons of men, whom God hath thus advanced,
Created in his image, there to dwell
And worship him, and in reward to rule
Over his works, on earth, in sea, or air,
And multiply a race of worshipers 630
Holy and just ! thrice happy, if they know
Their happiness, and persevere upright !'
" So sung they, and the Empyrean rung
With halleluiahs. Thus was Sabbath kept.
And thy request think now fulfilled, that asked
How first this World and face of things began,
And what before thy memory was done
From the beginning, that posterity,
Informed by thee, might know. If else thou seek'st
Aught, not surpassing human measure, say." 640

THE END OF THE SEVENTH BOOK

PARADISE LOST

BOOK VIII

THE ARGUMENT

Adam inquires concerning celestial motions ; is doubtfully answered, and exhorted to search rather things more worthy of knowledge. Adam assents, and, still desirous to detain Raphael, relates to him what he remembered since his own creation—his placing in Paradise ; his talk with God concerning solitude and fit society ; his first meeting and nuptials with Eve. His discourse with the Angel thereupon ; who, after admonitions repeated, departs.

THE Angel ended, and in Adam's ear
So charming left his voice that he a while
Thought him still speaking, still stood fixed to hear ;
Then, as new-waked, thus gratefully replied :—
 “ What thanks sufficient, or what recompense
Equal, have I to render thee, divine
Historian, who thus largely hast allayed
The thirst I had of knowledge, and voutsafed
This friendly condescension to relate
Things else by me unsearchable—now heard 10
With wonder, but delight, and, as is due,
With glory attributed to the high
Creator ? Something yet of doubt remains,
Which only thy solution can resolve.
When I behold this goodly frame, this World,
Of Heaven and Earth consisting, and compute
Their magnitudes—this Earth, a spot, a grain,

An atom, with the Firmament compared
And all her numbered stars, that seem to roll
Spaces incomprehensible (for such 20
Their distance argues, and their swift return
Diurnal) merely to officiate light
Round this opacous Earth, this punctual spot,
One day and night, in all their vast survey
Useless besides—reasoning, I oft admire
How Nature, wise and frugal, could commit
Such disproportions, with superfluous hand
So many nobler bodies to create,
Greater so manifold, to this one use,
For aught appears, and on their Orbs impose 30
Such restless revolution day by day
Repeated, while the sedentary Earth,
That better might with far less compass move,
Served by more noble than herself, attains
Her end without least motion, and receives,
As tribute, such a sumless journey brought
Of incorporeal speed, her warmth and light :
Speed, to describe whose swiftness number fails."

So spake our Sire, and by his countenance seemed
Entering on studious thoughts abstruse ; which Eve 40
Perceiving, where she sat retired in sight,
With lowliness majestic from her seat,
And grace that won who saw to wish her stay,
Rose, and went forth among her fruits and flowers,
To visit how they prospered, bud and bloom,
Her nursery ; they at her coming sprung,
And, touched by her fair tendance, gladlier grew.
Yet went she not as not with such discourse
Delighted, or not capable her ear
Of what was high. Such pleasure she reserved, 50
Adam relating, she sole auditress ;
Her husband the relater she preferred

Before the Angel, and of him to ask
Chose rather ; he, she knew, would intermix
Grateful digressions, and solve high dispute
With conjugal caresses : from his lip
Not words alone pleased her. Oh, when meet now
Such pairs, in love and mutual honour joined ?
With goddess-like demeanour forth she went,
Not unattended ; for on her as Queen 60
A pomp of winning Graces waited still,
And from about her shot darts of desire
Into all eyes, to wish her still in sight.
And Raphael now to Adam's doubt proposed
Benevolent and facile thus replied :—

“ To ask or search I blame thee not ; for Heaven
Is as the Book of God before thee set,
Wherein to read his wondrous works, and learn
His seasons, hours, or days, or months, or years.
This to attain, whether Heaven move or Earth 70
Imports not, if thou reckon right ; the rest
From Man or Angel the great Architect
Did wisely to conceal, and not divulge
His secrets, to be scanned by them who ought
Rather admire. Or, if they list to try
Conjecture, he his fabric of the Heavens
Hath left to their disputes—perhaps to move
His laughter at their quaint opinions wide
Hereafter, when they come to model Heaven,
And calculate the stars ; how they will wield 80
The mighty frame ; how build, unbuild, contrive
To save appearances ; how gird the Sphere
With Centric and Eccentric scribbled o'er,
Cycle and Epicycle, Orb in Orb.
Already by thy reasoning this I guess,
Who art to lead thy offspring, and suppos'st
That bodies bright and greater should not serve

The less not bright, nor Heaven such journeys run,
Earth sitting still, when she alone receives
The benefit. Consider, first, that great 90
Or bright infers not excellence. The Earth,
Though, in comparison of Heaven, so small,
Nor glistening, may of solid good contain
More plenty than the Sun that barren shines,
Whose virtue on itself works no effect,
But in the fruitful Earth ; there first received,
His beams unactive else, their vigour find.
Yet not to Earth are those bright luminaries
Officious, but to thee, Earth's habitant.
And, for the Heaven's wide circuit, let it speak 100
The Maker's high magnificence, who built
So spacious, and his line stretched out so far,
That Man may know he dwells not in his own—
An edifice too large for him to fill,
Lodged in a small partition, and the rest
Ordained for uses to his Lord best known.
The swiftness of those Circles attribute,
Though numberless, to his omnipotence,
That to corporeal substances could add
Speed almost spiritual. Me thou think'st not slow, 110
Who since the morning-hour set out from Heaven
Where God resides, and ere mid-day arrived
In Eden—distance inexpressible
By numbers that have name. But this I urge,
Admitting motion in the Heavens, to show
Invalid that which thee to doubt it moved ;
Not that I so affirm, though so it seem
To thee who hast thy dwelling here on Earth.
God, to remove his ways from human sense,
Placed Heaven from Earth so far, that earthly sight,
If it presume, might err in things too high, 121
And no advantage gain. What if the Sun

Be centre to the World, and other Stars,
By his attractive virtue and their own
Incited, dance about him various rounds?
Their wandering course, now high, now low, then hid
Progressive, retrograde, or standing still,
In six thou seest; and what if, seventh to these,
The planet Earth, so steadfast though she seem,
Insensibly three different motions move? 130
Which else to several spheres thou must ascribe,
Moved contrary with thwart obliquities,
Or save the Sun his labour, and that swift
Nocturnal and diurnal rhomb supposed,
Invisible else above all stars, the wheel
Of Day and Night; which needs not thy belief,
If Earth, industrious of herself, fetch Day,
Travelling east, and with her part averse
From the Sun's beam meet Night, her other part
Still luminous by his ray. What if that light, 140
Sent from her through the wide transpicious air,
To the terrestrial Moon be as a star,
Enlightening her by day, as she by night
This Earth—reciprocal, if land be there,
Fields and inhabitants? Her spots thou seest
As clouds, and clouds may rain, and rain produce
Fruits in her softened soil, for some to eat
Allotted there; and other Suns, perhaps,
With their attendant Moons, thou wilt descry,
Communicating male and female light— 150
Which two great sexes animate the World,
Stored in each Orb perhaps with some that live.
For such vast room in Nature unpossessed
By living soul, desert and desolate,
Only to shine, yet scarce to contribute
Each Orb a glimpse of light, conveyed so far
Down to this habitable, which returns

Light back to them, is obvious to dispute.
But whether thus these things, or whether not—
Whether the Sun, predominant in heaven, 160
Rise on the Earth, or Earth rise on the Sun ;
He from the east his flaming road begin,
Or she from west her silent course advance
With inoffensive pace that spinning sleeps
On her soft axle, while she paces even,
And bears thee soft with the smooth air along—
Solicit not thy thoughts with matters hid :
Leave them to God above ; him serve and fear.
Of other creatures as him pleases best,
Wherever placed, let him dispose ; joy thou 170
In what he gives to thee, this Paradise
And thy fair Eve ; Heaven is for thee too high
To know what passes there. Be lowly wise ;
Think only what concerns thee and thy being ;
Dream not of other worlds, what creatures there
Live, in what state, condition, or degree—
Contented that thus far hath been revealed
Not of Earth only, but of highest Heaven.”

To whom thus Adam, cleared of doubt, replied :—
“ How fully hast thou satisfied me, pure 180
Intelligence of Heaven, Angel serene,
And, freed from intricacies, taught to live
The easiest way, nor with perplexing thoughts
To interrupt the sweet of life, from which
God hath bid dwell far off all anxious cares,
And not molest us, unless we ourselves
Seek them with wandering thoughts, and notions vain !
But apt the mind or fancy is to rove
Unchecked ; and of her roving is no end,
Till, warned, or by experience taught, she learn 190
That not to know at large of things remote
From use, obscure and subtle, but to know

That which before us lies in daily life,
Is the prime wisdom : what is more is fume,
Or emptiness, or fond impertinence,
And renders us in things that most concern
Unpractised, unprepared, and still to seek.
Therefore from this high pitch let us descend
A lower flight, and speak of things at hand
Useful ; whence, haply, mention may arise 200
Of something not unseasonable to ask,
By sufferance, and thy wonted favour, deigned.
Thee I have heard relating what was done
Ere my remembrance ; now hear *me* relate
My story, which, perhaps, thou hast not heard.
And day is yet not spent ; till then thou scest
How subtly to detain thee I devise,
Inviting thee to hear while I relate—
Fond, were it not in hope of thy reply.
For, while I sit with thee, I seem in Heaven ; 210
And sweeter thy discourse is to my ear
Than fruits of palm-tree, pleasantest to thirst
And hunger both, from labour, at the hour
Of sweet repast. They satiate, and soon fill,
Though pleasant ; but thy words, with grace divine
Imbued, bring to their sweetness no satiety."

To whom thus Raphael answered, heavenly meek :—
"Nor are thy lips ungraceful, Sire of Men,
Nor tongue ineloquent ; for God on thee
Abundantly his gifts hath also poured, 220
Inward and outward both, his image fair :
Speaking, or mute, all comeliness and grace
Attends thee, and each word, each motion, forms.
Nor less think we in Heaven of thee on Earth
Than of our fellow-servant, and inquire
Gladly into the ways of God with Man ;
For God, we see, hath honoured thee, and set

On Man his equal love. Say therefore on ;
For I that day was absent, as befell,
Bound on a voyage uncouth and obscure, 230
Far on excursion toward the gates of Hell,
Squared in full legion (such command we had),
To see that none thence issued forth a spy
Or enemy, while God was in his work,
Lest he, incensed at such eruption bold,
Destruction with Creation might have mixed.
Not that they durst without his leave attempt ;
But us he sends upon his high behests
For state, as sovran King, and to inure
Our prompt obedience. Fast we found, fast shut, 240
The dismal gates, and barricadoed strong,
But, long ere our approaching, heard within
Noise, other than the sound of dance or song—
Torment, and loud lament, and furious rage.
Glad we returned up to the coasts of Light
Ere Sabbath-evening ; so we had in charge.
But thy relation now ; for I attend,
Pleased with thy words no less than thou with mine.”

So spake the godlike Power, and thus our Sire :—
“ For Man to tell how human life began 250
Is hard ; for who himself beginning knew ?
Desire with thee still longer to converse
Induced me. As new-waked from soundest sleep,
Soft on the flowery herb I found me laid,
In balmy sweat, which with his beams the Sun
Soon dried, and on the reeking moisture fed.
Straight toward Heaven my wondering eyes I turned,
And gazed a while the ample sky, till, raised
By quick instinctive motion, up I sprung,
As thitherward endcavouring, and upright 260
Stood on my feet. About me round I saw
Hill, dale, and shady woods, and sunny plains,

And liquid lapse of murmuring streams ; by these,
Creatures that lived and moved, and walked or flew,
Birds on the branches warbling : all things smiled ;
With fragrance and with joy my heart o'erflowed.
Myself I then perused, and limb by limb
Surveyed, and sometimes went, and sometimes ran
With supple joints, as lively vigour led ;
But who I was, or where, or from what cause, 270
Knew not. To speak I tried, and forthwith spake ;
My tongue obeyed, and readily could name
Whate'er I saw. 'Thou Sun,' said I, 'fair light,
And thou enlightened Earth, so fresh and gay,
Ye hills and dales, ye rivers, woods, and plains,
And ye that live and move, fair creatures, tell,
Tell, if ye saw, how came I thus, how here !
Not of myself ; by some great Maker then,
In goodness and in power pre-eminent.
Tell me how may I know him, how adore, 280
From whom I have that thus I move and live,
And feel that I am happier than I know !'
While thus I called, and strayed I knew not whither,
From where I first drew air, and first beheld
This happy light, when answer none returned,
On a green shady bank, profuse of flowers,
Pensive I sat me down. There gentle sleep
First found me, and with soft oppression seized
My drowsèd sense, untroubled, though I thought
I then was passing to my former state 290
Insensible, and forthwith to dissolve :
When suddenly stood at my head a dream,
Whose inward apparition gently moved
My fancy to believe I yet had being,
And lived. One came, methought, of shape divine,
And said, 'Thy mansion wants thee, Adam ; rise,
First Man, of men innumerable ordained

First father ! called by thee, I come thy guide
To the Garden of Bliss, thy seat prepared.'
So saying, by the hand he took me, raised, 300
And over fields and waters, as in air
Smooth sliding without step, last led me up
A woody mountain, whose high top was plain,
A circuit wide, enclosed, with goodliest trees
Planted, with walks and bowers, that what I saw
Of Earth before scarce pleasant seemed. Each tree
Loaden with fairest fruit, that hung to the eye
Tempting, stirred in me sudden appetite
To pluck and eat ; whereat I waked, and found
Before mine eyes all real, as the dream 310
Had lively shadowed. Here had new begun
My wandering, had not He who was my guide
Up hither from among the trees appeared,
Presence Divine. Rejoicing, but with awe,
In adoration at his feet I fell
Submiss. He reared me, and, ' Whom thou sought'st
I am,'
Said mildly, ' Author of all this thou seest
Above, or round about thee, or beneath.
This Paradise I give thee ; count it thine
To till and keep, and of the fruit to eat. 320
Of every tree that in the Garden grows
Eat freely with glad heart ; fear here no dearth.
But of the tree whose operation brings
Knowledge of good and ill, which I have set,
The pledge of thy obedience and thy faith,
Amid the garden by the Tree of Life—
Remember what I warn thee—shun to taste,
And shun the bitter consequence : for know,
The day thou eat'st thereof, my sole command
Transgressed, inevitably thou shalt die, 330
From that day mortal, and this happy state

Shalt lose, expelled from hence into a world
Of woe and sorrow !' Sternly he pronounced
The rigid interdiction, which resounds
Yet dreadful in mine ear, though in my choice
Not to incur ; but soon his clear aspect
Returned, and gracious purpose thus renewed :
'Not only these fair bounds, but all the Earth
To thee and to thy race I give ; as lords
Possess it, and all things that therein live, 340
Or live in sea or air, beast, fish, and fowl.
In sign whereof, each bird and beast behold
After their kinds ; I bring them to receive
From thee their names, and pay thee fealty
With low subjection. Understand the same
Of fish within their watery residence,
Not hither summoned, since they cannot change
Their element to draw the thinner air.'
As thus he spake, each bird and beast behold
Approaching two and two—these cowering low 350
With blandishment ; each bird stooped on his wing.
I named them as they passed, and understood
Their nature ; with such knowledge God endued
My sudden apprehension. But in these
I found not what methought I wanted still,
And to the Heavenly Vision thus presumed :—
" ' O, by what name—for Thou above all these,
Above mankind, or aught than mankind higher,
Surpassest far my naming—how may I
Adore thee, Author of this Universe, 360
And all this good to Man, for whose well-being
So amply, and with hands so liberal,
Thou hast provided all things ? But with me
I see not who partakes. In solitude
What happiness ? who can enjoy alone,
Or, all enjoying, what contentment find ?'

Thus I, presumptuous ; and the Vision bright,
As with a smile more brightened, thus replied :—

“ ‘What call’st thou solitude ? Is not the Earth
With various living creatures, and the Air, 370
Replenished, and all these at thy command
To come and play before thee ? Know’st thou not
Their language and their ways ? They also know,
And reason not contemptibly ; with these
Find pastime, and bear rule ; thy realm is large.’
So spake the Universal Lord, and seemed
So ordering. I, with leave of speech implored,
And humble deprecation, thus replied :—

“ ‘Let not my words offend thee, Heavenly Power ;
My Maker, be propitious while I speak. 380
Hast thou not made me here thy substitute,
And these inferior far beneath me set ?
Among unequals what society
Can sort, what harmony or true delight ?
Which must be mutual, in proportion due
Given and received ; but, in disparity,
The one intense, the other still remiss,
Cannot well suit with either, but soon prove
Tedious alike. Of fellowship I speak
Such as I seek, fit to participate 390
All rational delight, wherein the brute
Cannot be human consort. They rejoice
Each with their kind, lion with lioness ;
So fitly them in pairs thou hast combined :
Much less can bird with beast, or fish with fowl,
So well converse, nor with the ox the ape ;
Worse, then, can man with beast, and least of all.’

“ Whereto the Almighty answered, not displeased :—
‘A nice and subtle happiness, I see,
Thou to thyself propos’st, in the choice 400
Of thy associates, Adam, and wilt taste

No pleasure, though in pleasure, solitary.
What think'st thou, then, of me, and this my state?
Seem I to thee sufficiently possessed
Of happiness, or not, who am alone
From all eternity? for none I know
Second to me or like, equal much less.
How have I, then, with whom to hold converse,
Save with the creatures which I made, and those
To me inferior infinite descents 410
Beneath what other creatures are to thee?'

"He ceased. I lowly answered:—'To attain
The highth and depth of thy eternal ways
All human thoughts come short, Supreme of Things!
Thou in thyself art perfect, and in thee
Is no deficiency found. Not so is Man,
But in degree—the cause of his desire
By conversation with his like to help
Or solace his defects. No need that thou
Shouldst propagate, already infinite, 420
And through all numbers absolute, though One;
But Man by number is to manifest
His single imperfection, and beget
Like of his like, his image multiplied,
In unity defective; which requires
Collateral love, and dearest amity.
Thou, in thy secrecy although alone,
Best with thyself accompanied, seek'st not
Social communication—yet, so pleased,
Canst raise thy creature to what highth thou wilt 430
Of union or communion, deified;
I, by conversing, cannot these erect
From prone, nor in their ways complacency find.'
Thus I emboldened spake, and freedom used
Permissive, and acceptance found; which gained
This answer from the gracious Voice Divine:—

“ ‘ Thus far to try thee, Adam, I was pleased,
And find thee knowing not of beasts alone,
Which thou hast rightly named, but of thyself—
Expressing well the spirit within thee free, 440
My image, not imparted to the brute ;
Whose fellowship, therefore, unmeet for thee,
Good reason was thou freely shouldst dislike.
And be so minded still. I, ere thou spakest,
Knew it not good for man to be alone,
And no such company as then thou saw’st
Intended thee—for trial only brought,
To see how thou couldst judge of fit and meet.
What next I bring shall please thee, be assured,
Thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self, 450
Thy wish exactly to thy heart’s desire.’

“ He ended, or I heard no more ; for now
My earthly, by his heavenly overpowered,
Which it had long stood under, strained to the highth
In that celestial colloquy sublime,
As with an object that excels the sense,
Dazzled and spent, sunk down, and sought repair
Of sleep ; which instantly fell on me, called
By Nature as in aid, and closed mine eyes.
Mine eyes he closed, but open left the cell 460
Of fancy, my internal sight ; by which,
Abstract as in a trance, methought I saw,
Though sleeping, where I lay, and saw the Shape
Still glorious before whom awake I stood ;
Who, stooping, opened my left side, and took
From thence a rib, with cordial spirits warm,
And life-blood streaming fresh ; wide was the wound,
But suddenly with flesh filled up and healed.
The rib he formed and fashioned with his hands ;
Under his forming hands a creature grew, 470
Man-like, but different sex, so lovely fair

That what seemed fair in all the world seemed now
Mean, or in her summed up, in her contained
And in her looks, which from that time infused
Sweetness into my heart unfelt before,
And into all things from her air inspired
The spirit of love and amorous delight.
She disappeared, and left me dark ; I waked
To find her, or for ever to deplore
Her loss, and other pleasures all abjure : 480
When, out of hope, behold her not far off,
Such as I saw her in my dream, adorned
With what all Earth or Heaven could bestow
To make her amiable. On she came,
Led by her Heavenly Maker, though unseen,
And guided by his voice, nor uninformed
Of nuptial sanctity and marriage rites.
Grace was in all her steps, heaven in her eye,
In every gesture dignity and love.
I, overjoyed, could not forbear aloud :— 490

“ ‘ This turn hath made amends ; thou hast fulfilled
Thy words, Creator bounteous and benign,
Giver of all things fair—but fairest this
Of all thy gifts !—nor enviest. I now see
Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, my Self
Before me. Woman is her name, of Man
Extracted ; for this cause he shall forgo
Father and mother, and to his wife adhere,
And they shall be one flesh, one heart, one soul.’

“ She heard me thus ; and, though divinely brought,
Yet innocence and virgin modesty, 501
Her virtue, and the conscience of her worth,
That would be wooed, and not unsought be won,
Not obvious, not obtrusive, but retired,
The more desirable—or, to say all,
Nature herself, though pure of sinful thought—

Wrought in her so, that, seeing me, she turned.
I followed her ; she what was honour knew,
And with obsequious majesty approved
My pleaded reason. To the nuptial bower 510
I led her blushing like the Morn ; all Heaven,
And happy constellations, on that hour
Shed their selectest influence ; the Earth
Gave sign of gratulation, and each hill ;
Joyous the birds ; fresh gales and gentle airs
Whispered it to the woods, and from their wings
Flung rose, flung odours from the spicy shrub,
Disporting, till the amorous bird of night
Sung spousal, and bid haste the Evening-star
On his hill-top to light the bridal lamp. 520

“ Thus have I told thee all my state, and brought
My story to the sum of earthly bliss
Which I enjoy, and must confess to find
In all things else delight indeed, but such
As, used or not, works in the mind no change,
Nor vehement desire—these delicacies
I mean of taste, sight, smell, herbs, fruits, and flowers,
Walks, and the melody of birds ; but here,
Far otherwise, transported I behold,
Transported touch ; here passion first I felt, 530
Commotion strange, in all enjoyments else
Superior and unmoved, here only weak
Against the charm of beauty’s powerful glance.
Or Nature failed in me, and left some part
Not proof enough such object to sustain,
Or, from my side subducting, took perhaps
More than enough—at least on her bestowed
Too much of ornament, in outward show
Elaborate, of inward less exact.
For well I understand in the prime end 540
Of Nature her the inferior, in the mind

And inward faculties, which most excel ;
In outward also her resembling less
His image who made both, and less expressing
The character of that dominion given
O'er other creatures. Yet, when I approach
Her loveliness, so absolute she seems
And in herself complete, so well to know
Her own, that what she wills to do or say
Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best. 550
All higher Knowledge in her presence falls
Degraded ; Wisdom in discourse with her
Loses, discountenanced, and like Folly shows ;
Authority and Reason on her wait,
As one intended first, not after made
Occasionally ; and, to consummate all,
Greatness of mind and nobleness their seat
Build in her loveliest, and create an awe
About her, as a guard angelic placed."

To whom the Angel, with contracted brow :— 560
" Accuse not Nature ! she hath done her part ;
Do thou but thine ! and be not diffident
Of Wisdom ; she deserts thee not, if thou
Dismiss not her, when most thou need'st her nigh,
By attributing overmuch to things
Less excellent, as thou thyself perceiv'st.
For, what admir'st thou, what transports thee so ?
An outside—fair, no doubt, and worthy well
Thy cherishing, thy honouring, and thy love ;
Not thy subjection. Weigh with her thyself ; 570
Then value. Oft-times nothing profits more
Than self-esteem, grounded on just and right
Well managed. Of that skill the more thou know'st,
The more she will acknowledge thee her head,
And to realities yield all her shows—
Made so adorn for thy delight the more,

So awful, that with honour thou may'st love
Thy mate, who sees when thou art seen least wise.
But, if the sense of touch, whereby mankind
Is propagated, seem such dear delight 580
Beyond all other, think the same voutsafed
To cattle and each beast ; which would not be
To them made common and divulged, if aught
Therein enjoyed were worthy to subdue
The soul of Man, or passion in him move.
What higher in her society thou find'st
Attractive, human, rational, love still :
In loving thou dost well ; in passion not,
Wherein true Love consists not. Love refines
The thoughts, and heart enlarges—hath his seat 590
In Reason, and is judicious, is the scale
By which to Heavenly Love thou may'st ascend,
Not sunk in carnal pleasure ; for which cause
Among the beasts no mate for thee was found."

To whom thus, half abashed, Adam replied :—
" Neither her outside formed so fair, nor aught
In procreation, common to all kinds
(Though higher of the genial bed by far,
And with mysterious reverence, I deem),
So much delights me as those graceful acts, 600
Those thousand decencies, that daily flow
From all her words and actions, mixed with love
And sweet compliance, which declare unfeigned
Union of mind, or in us both one soul—
Harmony to behold in wedded pair
More grateful than harmonious sound to the ear.
Yet these subject not ; I to thee disclose
What inward thence I feel, not therefore foiled,
Who meet with various objects, from the sense
Variously representing, yet, still free, 610
Approve the best, and follow what I approve.

To love thou blam'st me not—for Love, thou say'st,
Leads up to Heaven, is both the way and guide ;
Bear with me, then, if lawful what I ask.
Love not the Heavenly Spirits, and how their love
Express they—by looks only, or do they mix
Irradiance, virtual or immediate touch ?”

To whom the Angel, with a smile that glowed
Celestial rosy-red, Love's proper hue,
Answered :—“ Let it suffice thee that thou know'st 620
Us happy, and without Love no happiness.
Whatever pure thou in the body enjoy'st
(And pure thou wert created) we enjoy
In eminence, and obstacle find none
Of membrane, joint, or limb, exclusive bars.
Easier than air with air, if Spirits embrace,
Total they mix, union of pure with pure
Desiring, nor restrained conveyance need
As flesh to mix with flesh, or soul with soul.
But I can now no more · the parting Sun 630
Beyond the Earth's green Cape and verdant Isles
Hesperian sets, my signal to depart.
Be strong, live happy, and love ! but first of all
Him whom to love is to obey, and keep
His great command ; take heed lest passion sway
Thy judgment to do aught which else free-will
Would not admit ; thine and of all thy sons
The weal or woe in thee is placed ; beware !
I in thy persevering shall rejoice,
And all the Blest. Stand fast ; to stand or fall 640
Free in thine own arbitrement it lies.
Perfect within, no outward aid require ;
And all temptation to transgress repel.”

So saying, he arose ; whom Adam thus
Followed with benediction :—“ Since to part,
Go, Heavenly Guest, Ethereal Messenger,

PARADISE LOST

BOOK X

THE ARGUMENT

Man's transgression known, the Guardian Angels forsake Paradise, and return up to Heaven to approve their vigilance, and are approved ; God declaring that the entrance of Satan could not be by them prevented. He sends his Son to judge the transgressors ; who descends, and gives sentence accordingly ; then, in pity, clothes them both, and reascends. Sin and Death, sitting till then at the gates of Hell, by wondrous sympathy feeling the success of Satan in this new World, and the sin by Man there committed, resolve to sit no longer confined in Hell, but to follow Satan, their sire, up to the place of Man : to make the way easier from Hell to this World to and fro, they pave a broad highway or bridge over Chaos, according to the track that Satan first made ; then, preparing for Earth, they meet him, proud of his success, returning to Hell : their mutual gratulation. Satan arrives at Pandemonium ; in full assembly relates, with boasting, his success against Man ; instead of applause is entertained with a general hiss by all his audience, transformed, with himself also, suddenly into Serpents, according to his doom given in Paradise ; then, deluded with a show of the Forbidden Tree springing up before them, they, greedily reaching to take of the fruit, chew dust and bitter ashes. The proceedings of Sin and Death : God foretells the final victory of his Son over them, and the renewing of all things ; but, for the present, commands his Angels to make several alterations in the Heavens and Elements. Adam, more and more perceiving his fallen condition, heavily bewails, rejects the condolment of Eve ; she persists, and at length appeases him : then, to evade the curse likely to fall on their offspring, proposes to Adam violent ways ; which he approves not, but, conceiving better hope, puts her in mind of the late promise made them, that her seed should be revenged on the Serpent, and exhorts her, with him, to seek peace of the offended Deity by repentance and supplication.

MEANWHILE the heinous and despiteful act
Of Satan done in Paradise, and how
He, in the Serpent, had perverted Eve,

Her husband she, to taste the fatal fruit,
Was known in Heaven ; for what can scape the
Of God all-seeing, or deceive his heart
Omniscient? who, in all things wise and just,
Hindered not Satan to attempt the mind
Of Man, with strength entire and free will armed
Complete to have discovered and repulsed
Whatever wiles of foe or seeming friend.
For still they knew, and ought to have still rememb^l,
The high injunction not to taste that fruit,
Whoever tempted ; which they not obeying
Incurred (what could they less ?) the penalty,
And, manifold in sin, deserved to fall.
Up into Heaven from Paradise in haste
The Angelic guards ascended, mute and sad
For Man ; for of his state by this they knew,
Much wondering how the subtle Fiend had stolen
Entrance unseen. Soon as the unwelcome news
From Earth arrived at Heaven-gate, displeased
All were who heard ; dim sadness did not spare
That time celestial visages, yet, mixed
With pity, violated not their bliss.
About the new-arrived, in multitudes,
The Ethereal people ran, to hear and know
How all befell. They towards the throne supreme,
Accountable, made haste, to make appear,
With righteous plea, their utmost vigilance,
And easily approved ; when the Most High,
Eternal Father, from his secret cloud
Amidst, in thunder uttered thus his voice :—

“ Assembled Angels, and ye Powers returned
From unsuccessful charge, be not dismayed
Nor troubled at these tidings from the Earth,
Which your sincerest care could not prevent,
Foretold so lately what would come to pass,

When first this Tempter crossed the gulf from Hell.
I told ye then he should prevail, and speed 40
On his bad errand—Man should be seduced,
And flattered out of all, believing lies
Against his Maker ; no decree of mine
Concurring to necessitate his fall,
Or touch with lightest moment of impulse
His free will, to her own inclining left
In even scale. But fallen he is ; and now
What rests, but that the mortal sentence pass
On his transgression, Death denounced that day ?
Which he presumes already vain and void, 50
Because not yet inflicted, as he feared,
By some immediate stroke, but soon shall find
Forbearance no acquittance ere day end.
Justice shall not return, as bounty, scorned.
But whom send I to judge them ? whom but thee,
Vicegerent Son ? To thee I have transferred
All judgment, whether in Heaven, or Earth, or Hell.
Easy it may be seen that I intend
Mercy colleague with justice, sending thee,
Man's friend, his Mediator, his designed 60
Both ransom and Redeemer voluntary,
And destined Man himself to judge Man fallen."

So spake the Father ; and, unfolding bright
Toward the right hand his glory, on the Son
Blazed forth unclouded deity. He full
Resplendent all his Father manifest
Expressed, and thus divinely answered mild :—

" Father Eternal, thine is to decree ;
Mine both in Heaven and Earth to do thy will
Supreme, that thou in me, thy Son beloved, 70
May'st ever rest well pleased. I go to judge
On Earth these thy transgressors ; but thou know'st,
Whoever judged, the worst on me must light,

When time shall be ; for so I undertook
Before thee, and, not repenting, this obtain
Of right, that I may mitigate their doom
On me derived. Yet I shall temper so
Justice with mercy as may illustrate most
Them fully satisfied, and thee appease.
Attendance none shall need, nor train, where none 80
Are to behold the judgment but the judged,
Those two ; the third best absent is condemned,
Convict by flight, and rebel to all law ;
Conviction to the Serpent none belongs."

Thus saying, from his radiant seat he rose
Of high collateral glory. Him Thrones and Powers,
Princedoms, and Dominations ministrant,
Accompanied to Heaven-gate, from whence
Eden and all the coast in prospect lay.
Down he descended straight ; the speed of Gods 90
Time counts not, though with swiftest minutes winged.

Now was the Sun in western cadence low
From noon, and gentle airs due at their hour
To fan the Earth now waked, and usher in
The evening cool, when he, from wrath more cool,
Came, the mild judge and intercessor both,
To sentence Man. The voice of God they heard
Now walking in the Garden, by soft winds
Brought to their ears, while day declined ; they heard,
And from his presence hid themselves among 100
The thickest trees, both man and wife, till God,
Approaching, thus to Adam called aloud :—

"Where art thou, Adam, wont with joy to meet
My coming, seen far off? I miss thee here,
Not pleased, thus entertained with solitude,
Where obvious duty erewhile appeared unsought.
Or come I less conspicuous, or what change
Absents thee, or what chance detains? Come forth!"

He came, and with him Eve, more loth, though
first

To offend, discountenanced both, and discomposed. 110
Love was not in their looks, either to God
Or to each other, but apparent guilt,
And shame, and perturbation, and despair,
Anger, and obstinacy, and hate, and guile.
Whence Adam, faltering long, thus answered brief:—

“I heard thee in the Garden, and, of thy voice
Afraid, being naked, hid myself.” To whom
The gracious Judge, without revile, replied:—

“My voice thou oft hast heard, and hast not feared,
But still rejoiced; how is it now become 120
So dreadful to thee? That thou art naked who
Hath told thee? Hast thou eaten of the tree
Whereof I gave thee charge thou shouldst not eat?”
To whom thus Adam, sore beset, replied:—

“O Heaven! in evil strait this day I stand
Before my Judge—either to undergo
Myself the total crime, or to accuse
My other self, the partner of my life,
Whose failing, while her faith to me remains,
I should conceal, and not expose to blame 130
By my complaint. But strict necessity
Subdues me, and calamitous constraint,
Lest on my head both sin and punishment,
However insupportable, be all
Devolved; though, should I hold my peace, yet thou
Wouldst easily detect what I conceal.

This Woman, whom thou mad'st to be my help,
And gav'st me as thy perfect gift, so good,
So fit, so acceptable, so divine,
That from her hand I could suspect no ill, 140
And what she did, whatever in itself,
Her doing seemed to justify the deed—

She gave me of the tree, and I did eat."

To whom the Sovran Presence thus replied :—

"Was she thy God, that her thou didst obey
Before his voice? or was she made thy guide,
Superior, or but equal, that to her
Thou didst resign thy manhood, and the place
Wherein God set thee above her, made of thee
And for thee, whose perfection far excelled 150
Hers in all real dignity? Adorned
She was indeed, and lovely, to attract
Thy love, not thy subjection; and her gifts
Were such as under government well seemed—
Unseemly to bear rule; which was thy part
And person, hadst thou known thyself aright."

So having said, he thus to Eve in few :—

"Say, Woman, what is this which thou hast done?"

To whom sad Eve, with shame nigh overwhelmed,
Confessing soon, yet not before her Judge 160
Bold or loquacious, thus abashed replied :—
"The Serpent me beguiled, and I did eat."

Which when the Lord God heard, without delay
To judgment he proceeded on the accused
Serpent, though brute, unable to transfer
The guilt on him who made him instrument
Of mischief, and polluted from the end
Of his creation—justly then accursed,
As vitiated in nature. More to know
Concerned not Man (since he no further knew), 170
Nor altered his offence; yet God at last
To Satan, first in sin, his doom applied,
Though in mysterious terms, judged as then best;
And on the Serpent thus his curse let fall :—

"Because thou hast done this, thou art accursed
Above all cattle, each beast of the field;
Upon thy belly grovelling thou shalt go,

And dust shalt eat all the days of thy life.
Between thee and the Woman I will put
Enmity, and between thine and her seed ; 180
Her seed shall bruise thy head, thou bruise his heel."

So spake this oracle—then verified
When Jesus, son of Mary, second Eve,
Saw Satan fall like lightning down from Heaven,
Prince of the Air ; then, rising from his grave,
Spoiled Principalities and Powers, triumphed
In open show, and, with ascension bright,
Captivity led captive through the Air,
The realm itself of Satan, long usurped,
Whom He shall tread at last under our feet, 190
Even He who now foretold his fatal bruise,
And to the Woman thus his sentence turned :—

"Thy sorrow I will greatly multiply
By thy conception ; children thou shalt bring
In sorrow forth, and to thy husband's will
Thine shall submit ; he over thee shall rule."

On Adam last thus judgment he pronounced :—
"Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife,
And eaten of the tree concerning which
I charged thee, saying *Thou shalt not eat thereof*, 200
Cursed is the ground for thy sake ; thou in sorrow
Shalt eat thereof all the days of thy life ;
Thorns also and thistles it shall bring thee forth
Unbid ; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field ;
In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread
Till thou return unto the ground ; for thou
Out of the ground wast taken : know thy birth,
For dust thou art, and shalt to dust return."

So judged he Man, both Judge and Saviour sent,
And the instant stroke of death, denounced that day,
Removed far off ; then, pitying how they stood 211
Before him naked to the air, that now

Must suffer change, disdained not to begin
Thenceforth the form of servant to assume.
As when he washed his servants' feet, so now,
As father of his family, he clad
Their nakedness with skins of beasts, or slain,
Or, as the snake, with youthful coat repaid ;
And thought not much to clothe his enemies.
Nor he their outward only with the skins 220
Of beasts, but inward nakedness, much more
Opprobrious, with his robe of righteousness
Arraying, covered from his Father's sight.
To Him with swift ascent he up returned,
Into his blissful bosom reassumed
In glory as of old ; to him, appeased,
All, though all-knowing, what had passed with Man
Recounted, mixing intercession sweet.

Meanwhile, ere thus was sinned and judged on Earth,
Within the gates of Hell sat Sin and Death, 230
In counterview within the gates, that now
Stood open wide, belching outrageous flame
Far into Chaos, since the Fiend passed through,
Sin opening ; who thus now to Death began :—

“ O Son, why sit we here, each other viewing
Idly, while Satan, our great author, thrives
In' other worlds, and happier seat provides
For us, his offspring dear ? It cannot be
But that success attends him ; if mishap,
Ere this he had returned, with fury driven 240
By his avengers, since no place like this
Can fit his punishment, or their revenge.
Methinks I feel new strength within me rise,
Wings growing, and dominion given me large
Beyond this Deep—whatever draws me on,
Or sympathy, or some connatural force,
Powerful at greatest distance to unite

With secret amity things of like kind
By secretest conveyance. Thou, my shade
Inseparable, must with me along ; 250
For Death from Sin no power can separate.
But, lest the difficulty of passing back
Stay his return perhaps over this gulf
Impassable, impervious, let us try
(Adventurous work, yet to thy power and mine
Not unagreeable !) to found a path
Over this main from Hell to that new World
Where Satan now prevails—a monument
Of merit high to all the infernal host,
Easing their passage hence, for intercourse 260
Or transmigration, as their lot shall lead.
Nor can I miss the way, so strongly drawn
By this new-felt attraction and instinct."

Whom thus the meagre Shadow answered soon :—
"Go whither fate and inclination strong
Leads thee ; I shall not lag behind, nor err
The way, thou leading : such a scent I draw
Of carnage, prey innumerable, and taste
The savour of death from all things there that live.
Nor shall I to the work thou enterprisest 270
Be wanting, but afford thee equal aid."

So saying, with delight he snuffed the smell
Of mortal change on Earth. As when a flock
Of ravenous fowl, though many a league remote,
Against the day of battle, to a field
Where armies lie encamped come flying, lured
With scent of living carcasses designed
For death the following day in bloody fight ;
So scented the grim feature, and upturned
His nostril wide into the murky air, 280
Sagacious of his quarry from so far.
Then both, from out Hell-gates, into the waste

Wide anarchy of Chaos, damp and dark,
Flew diverse, and, with power (their power was great)
Hovering upon the waters, what they met
Solid or slimy, as in raging sea
Tossed up and down, together crowded drove,
From each side shoaling, towards the mouth of Hell ;
As when two polar winds, blowing adverse
Upon the Cronian sea, together drive 290
Mountains of ice, that stop the imagined way
Beyond Petsora eastward to the rich
Cathaian coast. The aggregated soil
Death with his mace petrific, cold and dry,
As with a trident smote, and fixed as firm
As Delos, floating once ; the rest his look
Bound with Gorgonian rigour not to move,
And with asphaltic slime ; broad as the gate,
Deep to the roots of Hell the gathered beach
They fastened, and the mole immense wrought on 300
Over the foaming Deep high-arched, a bridge
Of length prodigious, joining to the wall
Immovable of this now fenceless World,
Forfeit to Death—from hence a passage broad,
Smooth, easy, inoffensive, down to Hell.
So, if great things to small may be compared,
Xerxes, the liberty of Greece to yoke,
From Susa, his Memnonian palace high,
Came to the sea, and, over Hellespont
Bridging his way, Europe with Asia joined, 310
And scourged with many a stroke the indignant
waves.

Now had they brought the work by wondrous art
Pontifical—a ridge of pendent rock
Over the vexed Abyss, following the track
Of Satan, to the self-same place where he
First lighted from his wing and landed safe

From out of Chaos—to the outside bare
Of this round World. With pins of adamant
And chains they made all fast, too fast they made
And durable ; and now in little space 320
The confines met of Empyrean Heaven
And of this World, and on the left hand Hell
With long reach interposed ; three several ways
In sight to each of these three places led.
And now their way to Earth they had descried,
To Paradise first tending, when, behold
Satan, in likeness of an Angel bright,
Betwixt the Centaur and the Scorpion steering
His zenith, while the Sun in Aries rose !
Disguised he came ; but those his children dear 330
Their parent soon discerned, though in disguise.
He, after Eve seduced, unminded slunk
Into the wood fast by, and, changing shape
To observe the sequel, saw his guileful act
By Eve, though all unweeting, seconded
Upon her husband—saw their shame that sought
Vain covertures ; but, when he saw descend
The Son of God to judge them, terrified
He fled, not hoping to escape, but shun
The present—fearing, guilty, what his wrath 340
Might suddenly inflict ; that past, returned
By night, and, listening where the hapless pair
Sat in their sad discourse and various plaint,
Thence gathered his own doom ; which understood
Not instant, but of future time, with joy
And tidings fraught, to Hell he now returned,
And at the brink of Chaos, near the foot
Of this new wondrous pontifice, unhop'd
Met who to meet him came, his offspring dear.
Great joy was at their meeting, and at sight 350
Of that stupendious bridge his joy increased.

Long he admiring stood, till Sin, his fair
Enchanting daughter, thus the silence broke :—

“O Parent, these are thy magnific deeds,
Thy trophies ! which thou view'st as not thine own ,
Thou art their author and prime architect.
For I no sooner in my heart divined
(My heart, which by a secret harmony
Still moves with thine, joined in connexion sweet)
That thou on Earth hadst prospered, which thy looks
Now also evidence, but straight I felt— 361
Though distant from thee worlds between, yet felt—
That I must after thee with this thy son ;
Such fatal consequence unites us three.
Hell could no longer hold us in her bounds,
Nor this unvoyageable gulf obscure
Detain from following thy illustrious track.
Thou hast achieved our liberty, confined
Within Hell-gates till now ; thou us empowered
To fortify thus far, and overlay 370
With this portentous bridge the dark Abyss.
Thine now is all this world ; thy virtue hath won
What thy hands builded not ; thy wisdom gained,
With odds, what war hath lost, and fully avenged
Our foil in Heaven. Here thou shalt monarch reign,
There didst not ; there let Him still victor sway,
As battle hath adjudged, from this new World
Retiring, by his own doom alienated,
And henceforth monarchy with thee divide
Of all things, parted by the Empyrean bounds, 380
His Quadrature, from thy Orbicular World,
Or try thee now more dangerous to his throne.”

Whom thus the Prince of Darkness answered
glad :—

“Fair daughter, and thou, son and grandchild both,
High proof ye now have given to be the race

Of Satan (for I glory in the name,
Antagonist of Heaven's Almighty King),
Amplly have merited of me, of all
The Infernal Empire, that so near Heaven's door
Triumphal with triumphal act have met, 390
Mine with this glorious work, and made one realm
Hell and this World—one realm, one continent
Of easy thoroughfare. Therefore, while I
Descend through Darkness, on your road with ease,
To my associate Powers, them to acquaint
With these successes, and with them rejoice,
You two this way, among these numerous orbs,
All yours, right down to Paradise descend ;
There dwell, and reign in bliss ; thence on the Earth
Dominion exercise and in the Air, 400
Chiefly on Man, sole lord of all declared ;
Him first make sure your thrall, and lastly kill.
My substitutes I send ye, and create
Plenipotent on Earth, of matchless might
Issuing from me. On your joint vigour now
My hold of this new kingdom all depends,
Through Sin to Death exposed by my exploit.
If your joint power prevail, the affairs of Hell
No detriment need fear ; go, and be strong."

So saying, he dismissed them ; they with speed 410
Their course through thickest constellations held,
Spreading their bane ; the blasted stars looked wan,
And planets, planet-strook, real eclipse
Then suffered. The other way Satan went down
The causeway to Hell-gate ; on either side
Disparted Chaos overbuilt exclaimed,
And with rebounding surge the bars assailed,
That scorned his indignation. Through the gate,
Wide open and unguarded, Satan passed,
And all about found desolate ; for those 420

Appointed to sit there had left their charge,
Flown to the upper World ; the rest were all
Far to the inland retired, about the walls
Of Pandemonium, city and proud seat
Of Lucifer, so by allusion called
Of that bright star to Satan paragoned.
There kept their watch the legions, while the Grand
In council sat, solicitous what chance
Might intercept their Emperor sent ; so he
Departing gave command, and they observed. 430
As when the Tartar from his Russian foe,
By Astracan, over the snowy plains,
Retires, or Bactrian Sophi, from the horns
Of Turkish crescent, leaves all waste beyond
The realm of Aladule, in his retreat
To Tauris or Casbeen ; so these, the late
Heaven-banished host, left desert utmost Hell
Many a dark league, reduced in careful watch
Round their metropolis, and now expecting
Each hour their great Adventurer from the search 440
Of foreign worlds He through the midst unmarked,
In show plebeian Angel militant
Of lowest order, passed, and, from the door
Of that Plutonian hall, invisible
Ascended his high throne, which, under state
Of richest texture spread, at the upper end
Was placed in regal lustre. Down a while
He sat, and round about him saw, unseen.
At last, as from a cloud, his fulgent head
And shape star-bright appeared, or brighter, clad 450
With what permissive glory since his fall
Was left him, or false glitter. All amazed
At that so sudden blaze, the Stygian throng
Bent their aspect, and whom they wished beheld,
Their mighty Chief returned : loud was the acclaim.

Forth rushed in haste the great consulting Peers,
Raised from their dark Divan, and with like joy
Congratulant approached him ; who with hand
Silence, and with these words attention, won :—

“ Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues,
Powers !—

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For in possession such, not only of right,
I call ye, and declare ye now, returned,
Successful beyond hope, to lead ye forth
Triumphant out of this infernal pit
Abominable, accursed, the house of woe,
And dungeon of our tyrant ! Now possess,
As lords, a spacious World, to our native Heaven
Little inferior, by my adventure hard
With peril great achieved. Long were to tell
What I have done, what suffered, with what pain 470
Voyaged the unreal, vast, unbounded Deep
Of horrible confusion—over which
By Sin and Death a broad way now is paved,
To expedite your glorious march ; but I
Toiled out my uncouth passage, forced to ride
The untractable Abyss, plunged in the womb
Of unoriginal Night and Chaos wild,
That, jealous of their secrets, fiercely opposed
My journey strange, with clamorous uproar
Protesting Fate supreme ; thence how I found 480
The new-created World, which fame in Heaven
Long had foretold, a fabric wonderful,
Of absolute perfection ; therein Man
Placed in a paradise, by our exile
Made happy. Him by fraud I have seduced
From his Creator, and, the more to increase
Your wonder, with an apple ! He, thereat
Offended—worth your laughter !—hath given up
Both his belovèd Man and all his World

To Sin and Death a prey, and so to us, 490
Without our hazard, labour, or alarm,
To range in, and to dwell, and over Man
To rule, as over all he should have ruled.
True is, me also he hath judged ; or rather
Me not, but the brute Serpent, in whose shape
Man I deceived. That which to me belongs
Is enmity, which he will put between
Me and Mankind : I am to bruise his heel ;
His seed—when is not set—shall bruise my head !
A World who would not purchase with a bruise, 500
Or much more grievous pain ? Ye have the account
Of my performance ; what remains, ye Gods,
But up and enter now into full bliss ?”

So having said, a while he stood, expecting
Their universal shout and high applause
To fill his ear ; when, contrary, he hears,
On all sides, from innumerable tongues
A dismal universal hiss, the sound
Of public scorn. He wondered, but not long
Had leisure, wondering at himself now more. 510
His visage drawn he felt to sharp and spare,
His arms clung to his ribs, his legs entwining
Each other, till, supplanted, down he fell,
A monstrous serpent on his belly prone,
Reluctant, but in vain ; a greater power
Now ruled him, punished in the shape he sinned,
According to his doom. He would have spoke,
But hiss for hiss returned with forkèd tongue
To forkèd tongue ; for now were all transformed
Alike, to serpents all, as accessories 520
To his bold riot. Dreadful was the din
Of hissing through the hall, thick-swarmed now
With complicated monsters, head and tail—
Scorpion, and Asp, and Amphisbæna dire,

Cerastes horned, Hydrus, and Ellops drear,
And Dipsas (not so thick swarmed once the soil
Bedropt with blood of Gorgon, or the isle
Ophiusa); but still greatest he the midst,
Now Dragon grown, larger than whom the Sun
Engendered in the Pythian vale on slime, 530
Huge Python; and his power no less he seemed
Above the rest still to retain. They all
Him followed, issuing forth to the open field,
Where all yet left of that revolted rout,
Heaven-fallen, in station stood or just array,
Sublime with expectation when to see
In triumph issuing forth their glorious Chief.
They saw, but other sight instead—a crowd
Of ugly serpents! Horror on them fell,
And horrid sympathy; for what they saw 540
They felt themselves now changing. Down their arms,
Down fell both spear and shield; down they as fast,
And the dire hiss renewed, and the dire form
Caught by contagion, like in punishment
As in their crime. Thus was the applause they meant
Turned to exploding hiss, triumph to shame
Cast on themselves from their own mouths. There stood
A grove hard by, sprung up with this their change,
His will who reigns above, to aggravate
Their penance, laden with fair fruit, like that 550
Which grew in Paradise, the bait of Eve
Used by the Tempter. On that prospect strange
Their earnest eyes they fixed, imagining
For one forbidden tree a multitude
Now risen, to work them further woe or shame;
Yet, parched with scalding thirst and hunger fierce,
Though to delude them sent, could not abstain,
But on they rolled in heaps, and, up the trees
Climbing, sat thicker than the snaky locks

That curled Megæra. Greedily they plucked 560
The fruitage fair to sight, like that which grew
Near that bituminous lake where Sodom flamed ;
This, more delusive, not the touch, but taste
Deceived ; they, fondly thinking to allay
Their appetite with gust, instead of fruit
Chewed bitter ashes, which the offended taste
With spattering noise rejected Oft they assayed,
Hunger and thirst constraining ; drugged as oft,
With hatefulest disrelish writhed their jaws
With soot and cinders filled ; so oft they fell 570
Into the same illusion, not as Man
Whom they triumphed once lapsed. Thus were they
plagued,
And, worn with famine, long and ceaseless hiss,
Till their lost shape, permitted, they resumed—
Yearly enjoined, some say, to undergo
This annual humbling certain numbered days,
To dash their pride, and joy for Man seduced.
However, some tradition they dispersed
Among the Heathen of their purchase got,
And fabled how the Serpent, whom they called 580
Ophion, with Eurynome (the wide-
Encroaching Eve perhaps), had first the rule
Of high Olympus, thence by Saturn driven
And Ops, ere yet Dictæan Jove was born.

Meanwhile in Paradise the Hellish pair
Too soon arrived—Sin, there in power before
Once actual, now in body, and to dwell
Habitual habitant ; behind her Death,
Close following pace for pace, not mounted yet
On his pale horse ; to whom Sin thus began :— 590
“ Second of Satan sprung, all-conquering Death !
What think'st thou of our empire now ? though earned
With travail difficult, not better far

Than still at Hell's dark threshold to have sat watch,
Unnamed, undreaded, and thyself half-starved ?”

Whom thus the Sin-born Monster answered soon :—

“To me, who with eternal famine pine,
Alike is Hell, or Paradise, or Heaven—
There best where most with ravin I may meet :
Which here, though plenteous, all too little seems 600
To stuff this maw, this vast unhide-bound corpse.”

To whom the incestuous Mother thus replied :—

“Thou, therefore, on these herbs, and fruits, and flowers,
Feed first ; on each beast next, and fish, and fowl—
No homely morsels ; and whatever thing
The scythe of Time mows down devour unspared ;
Till I, in Man residing through the race,
His thoughts, his looks, words, actions, all infect,
And season him thy last and sweetest prey.”

This said, they both betook them several ways, 610
Both to destroy, or unimmortal make
All kinds, and for destruction to mature
Sooner or later ; which the Almighty seeing,
From his transcendent seat the Saints among,
To those bright Orders uttered thus his voice :—

“See with what heat these dogs of Hell advance
To waste and havoc yonder World, which I
So fair and good created, and had still
Kept in that state, had not the folly of Man
Let in these wasteful furies, who impute 620
Folly to me (so doth the Prince of Hell
And his adherents), that with so much ease
I suffer them to enter and possess
A place so heavenly, and, conniving, seem
To gratify my scornful enemies,
That laugh, as if, transported with some fit
Of passion, I to them had quitted all,
At random yielded up to their misrule ;

And know not that I called and drēw them thither,
My Hell-hounds, to lick up the draff and filth 630
Which Man's polluting sin with taint hath shed
On what was pure ; till, crammed and gorged, nigh burst
With sucked and glutted offal, at one sling
Of thy victorious arm, well-pleasing Son,
Both Sin and Death, and yawning Grave, at last
Through Chaos hurled, obstruct the mouth of Hell
For ever, and seal up his ravenous jaws.
Then Heaven and Earth, renewed, shall be made pure
To sanctity that shall receive no stain :
Till then the curse pronounced on both precedes." 640

He ended, and the Heavenly audience loud
Sung Halleluiah, as the sound of seas,
Through multitude that sung :—" Just are thy ways,
Righteous are thy decrees on all thy works ;
Who can extenuate thee ? Next, to the Son,
Destined restorer of Mankind, by whom
New Heaven and Earth shall to the ages rise,
Or down from Heaven descend." Such was their song,
While the Creator, calling forth by name
His mighty Angels, gave them several charge, 650
As sorted best with present things. The Sun
Had first his precept so to move, so shine,
As might affect the Earth with cold and heat
Scarce tolerable, and from the north to call
Decrepit winter, from the south to bring
Solstitial summer's heat. To the blanc Moon
Her office they prescribed ; to the other five
Their planetary motions and aspécts,
In sextile, square, and trine, and opposite,
Of noxious efficacy, and when to join 660
In synod unbenign ; and taught the fixed
Their influence malignant when to shower—
Which of them, rising with the Sun or falling,

Should prove tempestuous. To the winds they set
Their corners, when with bluster to confound
Sea, air, and shore ; the thunder when to roll
With terror through the dark aerial hall.
Some say he bid his Angels turn askance
The poles of Earth twice ten degrees and more
From the Sun's axle ; they with labour pushed 670
Oblique the centric Globe : some say the Sun
Was bid turn reins from the equinoctial road
Like distant breadth—to Taurus with the seven
Atlantic Sisters, and the Spartan Twins,
Up to the Tropic Crab ; thence down amain
By Leo, and the Virgin, and the Scales,
As deep as Capricorn ; to bring in change
Of seasons to each clime. Else had the spring
Perpetual smiled on Earth with vernant flowers,
Equal in days and nights, except to those 680
Beyond the polar circles ; to them day
Had unbenighted shone, while the low Sun,
To recompense his distance, in their sight
Had rounded still the horizon, and not known
Or east or west—which had forbid the snow
From cold Estotiland, and south as far
Beneath Magellan. At that tasted fruit,
The Sun, as from Thyestean banquet, turned
His course intended ; else how had the world
Inhabited, though sinless, more than now 690
Avoided pinching cold and scorching heat ?
These changes in the heavens, though slow, produced
Like change on sea and land—sideral blast,
Vapour, and mist, and exhalation hot,
Corrupt and pestilent. Now from the north
Of Norumbega, and the Samoed shore,
Bursting their brazen dungeon, armed with ice,
And snow, and hail, and stormy gust and flaw,

Boreas and Cæcias and Argestes loud
And Thrascias rend the woods, and seas upturn ; 700
With adverse blast upturns them from the south
Notus and Afer, black with thundrous clouds
From Serralliona ; thwart of these, as fierce
Forth rush the Levant and the Ponent winds,
Eurus and Zephyr, with their lateral noise,
Sirocco and Libecchio. Thus began
Outrage from lifeless things ; but Discord first,
Daughter of Sin, among the irrational
Death introduced through fierce antipathy.
Beast now with beast gan war, and fowl with fowl, 710
And fish with fish. To graze the herb all leaving
Devoured each other ; nor stood much in awe
Of Man, but fled him, or with countenance grim
Glared on him passing. These were from without
The growing miseries ; which Adam saw
Already in part, though hid in gloomiest shade,
To sorrow abandoned, but worse felt within,
And, in a troubled sea of passion tost,
Thus to disburden sought with sad complaint : --
 " O miserable of happy ! Is this the end 720
Of this new glorious World, and me so late
The glory of that glory ? who now, become
Accursed of blessèd, hide me from the face
Of God, whom to behold was then my highth
Of happiness ! Yet well, if here would end
The misery ! I deserved it, and would bear
My own deservings. But this will not serve :
All that I eat or drink, or shall beget,
Is propagated curse. O voice, once heard
Delightfully, '*Increase and multiply*' ; 730
Now death to hear ! for what can I increase
Or multiply but curses on my head ?
Who, of all ages to succeed, but, feeling

The evil on him brought by me, will curse
My head? 'Ill fare our Ancestor impure!
For this we may thank Adam!' but his thanks
Shall be the execration. So, besides
Mine own that bide upon me, all from me
Shall with a fierce reflux on me redound—
On me, as on their natural centre, light ; 740
Heavy, though in their place. O fleeting joys
Of Paradise, dear bought with lasting woes!
Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay
To mould me Man? Did I solicit thee
From darkness to promote me, or here place
In this delicious Garden? As my will
Concurred not to my being, it were but right
And equal to reduce me to my dust,
Desirous to resign and render back
All I received, unable to perform 750
Thy terms too hard, by which I was to hold
The good I sought not. To the loss of that,
Sufficient penalty, why hast thou added
The sense of endless woes? Inexplicable
Thy justice seems. Yet, to say truth, too late
I thus contest; then should have been refused
Those terms, whatever, when they were proposed.
Thou didst accept them: wilt thou enjoy the good,
Then cavil the conditions? And, though God
Made thee without thy leave, what if thy son 760
Prove disobedient, and, reprov'd, retort,
'Wherefore didst thou beget me? I sought it not!'
Wouldst thou admit for his contempt of thee
That proud excuse? yet him not thy election,
But natural necessity, begot.
God made thee of choice his own, and of his own
To serve him; thy reward was of his grace;
Thy punishment, then, justly is at his will.

Be it so, for I submit ; his doom is fair,
That dust I am, and shall to dust return. 770
O welcome hour whenever ! Why delays
His hand to execute what his decree
Fixed on this day ? Why do I overlive ?
Why am I mocked with death, and lengthened out
To deathless pain ? How gladly would I meet
Mortality, my sentence, and be earth
Insensible ! how glad would lay me down
As in my mother's lap ! There I should rest,
And sleep secure ; His dreadful voice no more
Would thunder in my ears ; no fear of worse 780
To me and to my offspring would torment me
With cruel expectation. Yet one doubt
Pursues me still—lest all I cannot die ;
Lest that pure breath of life, the Spirit of Man
Which God inspired, cannot together perish
With this corporeal clod. Then, in the grave,
Or in some other dismal place, who knows
But I shall die a living death ? O thought
Horrid, if true ! Yet why ? It was but breath
Of life that sinned : what dies but what had life 790
And sin ? The body properly hath neither.
All of me, then, shall die : let this appease
The doubt, since human reach no further knows.
For, though the Lord of all be infinite,
Is his wrath also ? Be it, Man is not so,
But mortal doomed. How can he exercise
Wrath without end on Man, whom death must end ?
Can he make deathless death ? That were to make
Strange contradiction ; which to God himself
Impossible is held, as argument 800
Of weakness, not of power. Will he draw out,
For anger's sake, finite to infinite
In punished Man, to satisfy his rigour

Satisfied never? That were to extend
His sentence beyond dust and Nature's law ;
By which all causes else according still
To the reception of their matter act,
Not to the extent of their own sphere. But say
That death be not one stroke, as I supposed,
Bereaving sense, but endless misery 810
From this day onward, which I feel begun
Both in me and without me, and so last
To perpetuity !——Ay me ! that fear
Comes thundering back with dreadful revolution
On my defenceless head ! Both Death and I
Am found eternal and incorporate both :
Nor I on my part single ; in me all
Posterity stands curs'd. Fair patrimony
That I must leave ye, sons ! Oh, were I able
To waste it all myself, and leave ye none ! 820
So disinherited, how would ye bless
Me, now your curse ! Ah, why should all Mankind,
For one man's fault, thus guiltless be condemn'd ?
If guiltless ? But from me what can proceed
But all corrupt—both mind and will depraved
Not to do only, but to will the same
With me ? How can they, then, acquitted stand
In sight of God ? Him, after all disputes,
Forced I absolve. All my evasions vain
And reasonings, though through mazes, lead me still
But to my own conviction : first and last 831
On me, me only, as the source and spring
Of all corruption, all the blame lights due.
So might the wrath ! Fond wish ! couldst thou support
That burden, heavier than the Earth to bear—
Than all the World much heavier, though divided
With that bad Woman ? Thus, what thou desir'st,
And what thou fear'st, alike destroys all hope

Of refuge, and concludes thee miserable
Beyond all past example and future— 840
To Satan only like, both crime and doom.
O Conscience ! into what abyss of fears
And horrors hast thou driven me ; out of which
I find no way, from deep to deeper plunged !”

Thus Adam to himself lamented loud
Through the still night—not now, as ere Man fell,
Wholesome and cool and mild, but with black air
Accompanied, with damps and dreadful gloom ;
Which to his evil conscience represented
All things with double terror. On the ground 850
Outstretched he lay, on the cold ground, and oft
Cursed his creation ; Death as oft accused
Of tardy execution, since denounced
The day of his offence. “ Why comes not Death,”
Said he, “ with one thrice-acceptable stroke
To end me ? Shall Truth fail to keep her word,
Justice divine not hasten to be just ?
But Death comes not at call ; Justice divine
Mends not her slowest pace for prayers or cries.
O woods, O fountains, hillocks, dales, and bowers ! 860
With other echo late I taught your shades
To answer, and resound far other song.”

Whom thus afflicted when sad Eve beheld,
Desolate where she sat, approaching nigh,
Soft words to his fierce passion she assayed ;
But her, with stern regard, he thus repelled :—
“ Out of my sight, thou serpent ! That name best
Befits thee, with him leagued, thyself as false
And hateful : nothing wants, but that thy shape
Like his, and colour serpentine, may show 870
Thy inward fraud, to warn all creatures from thee
Henceforth, lest that too heavenly form, pretended
To hellish falsehood, snare them. But for thee

I had persisted happy, had not thy pride
And wandering vanity, when least was safe,
Rejected my forewarning, and disdained
Not to be trusted—longing to be seen,
Though by the Devil himself; him overweening
To over-reach; but, with the Serpent meeting,
Fooled and beguiled; by him thou, I by thee, 880
To trust thee from my side, imagined wise,
Constant, mature, proof against all assaults,
And understood not all was but a show,
Rather than solid virtue, all but a rib
Crookèd by nature—bent, as now appears,
More to the part sinister—from me drawn;
Well if thrown out, as supernumerary
To my just number found! Oh, why did God,
Creator wise, that peopled highest Heaven
With Spirits masculine, create at last 890
This novelty on Earth, this fair defect
Of Nature, and not fill the World at once
With men as Angels, without feminine;
Or find some other way to generate
Mankind? This mischief had not then befallen,
And more that shall befall—innumerable
Disturbances on Earth through female snares,
And strait conjunction with this sex. For either
He never shall find out fit mate, but such
As some misfortune brings him, or mistake; 900
Or whom he wishes most shall seldom gain,
Through her perverseness, but shall see her gained
By a far worse, or, if she love, withheld
By parents; or his happiest choice too late
Shall meet, already linked and wedlock-bound
To a fell adversary, his hate or shame:
Which infinite calamity shall cause
To human life, and household peace confound."

He added not, and from her turned ; but Eve,
Not so repulsed, with tears that ceased not flowing, 910
And tresses all disordered, at his feet
Fell humble, and, embracing them, besought
His peace, and thus proceeded in her plaint :—

“ Forsake me not thus, Adam ! Witness Heaven
What love sincere and reverence in my heart
I bear thee, and unweeting have offended,
Unhappily deceived ! Thy suppliant
I beg, and clasp thy knees ; bereave me not
Whereon I live, thy gentle looks, thy aid,
Thy counsel in this uttermost distress, 920
My only strength and stay. Forlorn of thee,
Whither shall I betake me, where subsist ?
While yet we live, scarce one short hour perhaps,
Between us two let there be peace ; both joining,
As joined in injuries, one enmity
Against a foe by doom express assigned us,
That cruel Serpent. On me exercise not
Thy hatred for this misery befallen—
On me already lost, me than thyself
More miserable. Both have sinned ; but thou 930
Against God only ; I against God and thee,
And to the place of judgment will return,
There with my cries importune Heaven, that all
The sentence, from thy head removed, may light
On me, sole cause to thee of all this woe,
Me, me only, just object of His ire.”

She ended, weeping ; and her lowly plight,
Immovable till peace obtained from fault
Acknowledged and deplored, in Adam wrought
Commiseration. Soon his heart relented 940
Towards her, his life so late, and sole delight,
Now at his feet submissive in distress—
Creature so fair his reconciliation seeking,

His counsel whom she had displeased, his aid.
As one disarmed, his anger all he lost,
And thus with peaceful words upraised her soon :—

“Unwary, and too desirous, as before
So now, of what thou know'st not, who desir'st
The punishment all on thyself! Alas!
Bear thine own first, ill able to sustain 950
His full wrath whose thou feel'st as yet least part,
And my displeasure bear'st so ill. If prayers
Could alter high decrees, I to that place
Would speed before thee, and be louder heard,
That on my head all might be visited,
Thy frailty and infirmer sex forgiven,
To me committed, and by me exposed.
But rise; let us no more contend, nor blame
Each other, blamed enough elsewhere, but strive
In offices of love how we may lighten 960
Each other's burden in our share of woe;
Since this day's death denounced, if aught I see,
Will prove no sudden, but a slow-paced evil,
A long day's dying, to augment our pain,
And to our seed (O hapless seed!) derived.”

To whom thus Eve, recovering heart, replied :—
“Adam, by sad experiment I know
How little weight my words with thee can find,
Found so erroneous, thence by just event
Found so unfortunate. Nevertheless, 970
Restored by thee, vile as I am, to place
Of new acceptance, hopeful to regain
Thy love, the sole contentment of my heart,
Living or dying from thee I will not hide
What thoughts in my unquiet breast are risen,
Tending to some relief of our extremes,
Or end, though sharp and sad, yet tolerable,
As in our evils, and of easier choice.

If care of our descent perplex us most,
Which must be born to certain woe, devoured 980
By Death at last (and miserable it is
To be to others cause of misery,
Our own begotten, and of our loins to bring
Into this cursèd world a woeful race,
That, after wretched life, must be at last
Food for so foul a monster), in thy power
It lies, yet ere conception, to prevent
The race unblest, to being yet unbegot.
Childless thou art ; childless remain. So Death
Shall be deceived his glut, and with us two 990
Be forced to satisfy his ravenous maw.
But, if thou judge it hard and difficult,
Conversing, looking, loving, to abstain
From love's due rites, nuptial embraces sweet,
And with desire to languish without hope
Before the present object languishing.
With like desire—which would be misery
And torment less than none of what we dread—
Then, both our selves and seed at once to free
From what we fear for both, let us make short , 1000
Let us seek Death, or, he not found, supply
With our own hands his office on ourselves.
Why stand we longer shivering under fears
That show no end but death, and have the power,
Of many ways to die the shortest choosing,
Destruction with destruction to destroy ?”

She ended here, or vehement despair
Broke off the rest ; so much of death her thoughts
Had entertained as dyed her cheeks with pale.
But Adam, with such counsel nothing swayed, 1010
To better hopes his more attentive mind
Labouring had raised, and thus to Eve replied :—
“Eve, thy contempt of life and pleasure seems

To argue in thee something more sublime
And excellent than what thy mind contemns .
But self-destruction therefore sought refutes
That excellence thought in thee, and implies
Not thy contempt, but anguish and regret
For loss of life and pleasure overloved.
Or, if thou covet death, as utmost end
Of misery, so thinking to evade
The penalty pronounced, doubt not but God
Hath wiselier armed his vengeful ire than so
To be forestalled. Much more I fear lest death
So snatched will not exempt us from the pain
We are by doom to pay ; rather such acts
Of contumacy will provoke the Highest
To make death in us live. Then let us seek
Some safer resolution—which methinks
I have in view, calling to mind with heed
Part of our sentence, that thy seed shall bruise
The Serpent's head. Piteous amends ! unless
Be meant whom I conjecture, our grand foe,
Satan, who in the Serpent hath contrived
Against us this deceit. To crush his head
Would be revenge indeed—which will be lost
By death brought on ourselves, or childless days
Resolved, as thou proposest ; so our foe
Shall scape his punishment ordained, and we
Instead shall double ours upon our heads.
No more be mentioned, then, of violence
Against ourselves, and wilful barrenness
That cuts us off from hope, and savours only
Rancour and pride, impatience and despite,
Reluctance against God and his just yoke
Laid on our necks. Remember with what mild
And gracious temper He both heard and judged,
Without wrath or reviling. We expected

1020

1030

1040

Immediate dissolution, which we thought
Was meant by death that day ; when, lo ! to thee 1050
Pains only in child-bearing were foretold,
And bringing forth, soon recompensed with joy,
Fruit of thy womb. On me the curse aslope
Glanced on the ground. With labour I must earn
My bread ; what harm ? Idleness had been worse ;
My labour will sustain me. And, lest cold
Or heat should injure us, his timely care
Hath, unbesought, provided, and his hands
Clothed us unworthy, pitying while he judged.
How much more, if we pray him, will his ear 1060
Be open, and his heart to pity incline,
And teach us further by what means to shun
The inclement seasons, rain, ice, hail, and snow !
Which now the sky, with various face, begins
To show us in this mountain, while the winds
Blow moist and keen, shattering the graceful locks
Of these fair spreading trees ; which bids us seek
Some better shroud, some better warmth to cherish
Our limbs benumbed—ere this diurnal star
Leave cold the night, how we his gathered beams 1070
Reflected may with matter sere foment,
Or by collision of two bodies grind
The air attrite to fire ; as late the clouds,
Justling, or pushed with winds, rude in their shock,
Tine the slant lightning, whose thwart flame, driven
down,
Kindles the gummy bark of fir or pine,
And sends a comfortable heat from far,
Which might supply the Sun. Such fire to use,
And what may else be remedy or cure
To evils which our own misdeeds have wrought, 1080
He will instruct us praying, and of grace
Beseeching him ; so as we need not fear

To pass commodiously this life, sustained
By him with many comforts, till we end
In dust, our final rest and native home.
What better can we do than, to the place
Repairing where he judged us, prostrate fall
Before him reverent, and there confess
Humbly our faults, and pardon beg, with tears
Watering the ground, and with our sighs the air 1090
Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign
Of sorrow unfeigned and humiliation meek?
Undoubtedly he will relent, and turn
From his displeasure, in whose look serene,
When angry most he seemed and most severe,
What else but favour, grace, and mercy shone?"

So spake our Father penitent; nor Eve
Felt less remorse. They, forthwith to the place
Repairing where he judged them, prostrate fell
Before him reverent, and both confessed 1100
Humbly their faults, and pardon begged, with tears
Watering the ground, and with their sighs the air
Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign
Of sorrow unfeigned and humiliation meek.

PARADISE LOST

BOOK XI

THE ARGUMENT

The Son of God presents to his Father the prayers of our first parents now repenting, and intercedes for them. God accepts them, but declares that they must no longer abide in Paradise; sends Michael with a band of Cherubim to dispossess them, but first to reveal to Adam future things: Michael's coming down. Adam shows to Eve certain ominous signs: he discerns Michael's approach; goes out to meet him; the Angel denounces their departure. Eve's lamentation. Adam pleads, but submits; the Angel leads him up to a high hill; sets before him in vision what shall happen till the Flood.

THUS they, in lowliest plight, repentant stood
Praying; for from the mercy-seat above
Prevenient grace descending had removed
The stony from their hearts, and made new flesh
Regenerate grow instead, that sighs now breathed
Unutterable, which the Spirit of prayer
Inspired, and winged for Heaven with speedier flight
Than loudest oratory. Yet their port
Not of mean suitors; nor important less
Seemed their petition than when the ancient pair 10
In fables old, less ancient yet than these,
Deucalion and chaste Pyrrha, to restore
The race of mankind drowned, before the shrine
Of Themis stood devout. To Heaven their prayers
Flew up, nor missed the way, by envious winds
Blown vagabond or frustrate: in they passed

Dimensionless through heavenly doors ; then, clad
With incense, where the golden altar fumed,
By their great Intercessor, came in sight
Before the Father's throne. Them the glad Son 20
Presenting thus to intercede began :—

“ See, Father, what first-fruits on Earth are sprung
From thy implanted grace in Man—these sighs
And prayers, which in this golden censer, mixed
With incense, I, thy priest, before thee bring ;
Fruits of more pleasing savour, from thy seed
Sown with contrition in his heart, than those
Which, his own hand manuring, all the trees
Of Paradise could have produced, ere fallen
From innocence. Now, therefore, bend thine ear 30
To supplication ; hear his sighs, though mute ;
Unskilful with what words to pray, let me
Interpret for him, me his advocate
And propitiation ; all his works on me,
Good or not good, ingraft ; my merit those
Shall perfect, and for these my death shall pay.
Accept me, and in me from these receive
The smell of peace toward Mankind ; let him live,
Before thee reconciled, at least his days
Numbered, though sad, till death, his doom (which I 40
To mitigate thus plead, not to reverse),
To better life shall yield him, where with me
All my redeemed may dwell in joy and bliss,
Made one with me, as I with thee am one.”

To whom the Father, without cloud, serene :—
“ All thy request for Man, accepted Son,
Obtain ; all thy request was my decree.
But longer in that Paradise to dwell
The law I gave to Nature him forbids ;
Those pure immortal elements, that know 50
No gross, no unharmonious mixture foul,

Eject him, tainted now, and purge him off,
As a distemper, gross, to air as gross,
And mortal food, as may dispose him best
For dissolution wrought by sin, that first
Distempered all things, and of incorrupt
Corrupted. I, at first, with two fair gifts
Created him endowed—with Happiness
And Immortality ; that fondly lost,
This other served but to eternize woe, 60
Till I provided Death : so Death becomes
His final remedy, and, after life
Tried in sharp tribulation, and refined
By faith and faithful works, to second life,
Waked in the renovation of the just,
Resigns him up with Heaven and Earth renewed.
But let us call to synod all the Blest
Through Heaven's wide bounds ; from them I will not
hide

My judgments—how with Mankind I proceed,
As how with peccant Angels late they saw, 70
And in their state, though firm, stood more confirmed.”

He ended, and the Son gave signal high
To the bright Minister that watched. He blew
His trumpet, heard in Oreb since perhaps
When God descended, and perhaps once more
To sound at general doom. The angelic blast
Filled all the regions : from their blissful bowers
Of amarantine shade, fountain or spring,
By the waters of life, where'er they sat
In fellowships of joy, the Sons of Light 80
Hasted, resorting to the summons high,
And took their seats, till from his throne supreme
The Almighty thus pronounced his sovran will :—

“ O Sons, like one of us Man is become
To know both good and evil, since his taste

Of that defended fruit ; but let him boast
His knowledge of good lost and evil got,
Happier had it sufficed him to have known
Good by itself and evil not at all.
He sorrows now, repents, and prays contrite— 90
My motions in him ; longer than they move,
His heart I know how variable and vain,
Self-left. Lest, therefore, his now bolder hand
Reach also of the Tree of Life, and eat,
And live for ever, dream at least to live
For ever, to remove him I decree,
And send him from the Garden forth, to till
The ground whence he was taken, fitter soil.
Michael, this my behest have thou in charge :
Take to thee from among the Cherubim 100
Thy choice of flaming warriors, lest the Fiend,
Or in behalf of Man, or to invade
Vacant possession, some new trouble raise ;
Haste thee, and from the Paradise of God
Without remorse drive out the sinful pair,
From hallowed ground the unholy, and denounce
To them, and to their progeny, from thence
Perpetual banishment. Yet, lest they faint
At the sad sentence rigorously urged
(For I behold them softened, and with tears 110
Bewailing their excess), all terror hide.
If patiently thy bidding they obey,
Dismiss them not disconsolate ; reveal
To Adam what shall come in future days,
As I shall thee enlighten ; intermix
My covenant in the Woman's seed renewed.
So send them forth, though sorrowing, yet in 'peace ;
And on the east side of the Garden place,
Where entrance up from Eden easiest climbs,
Cherubic watch, and of a sword the flame 120

Wide-waving, all approach far off to fright,
And guard all passage to the Tree of Life ;
Lest Paradise a receptacle prove
To Spirits foul, and all my trees their prey,
With whose stolen fruit Man once more to delude."

He ceased, and the Archangelic Power prepared
For swift descent ; with him the cohort bright
Of watchful Cherubim. Four faces each
Had, like a double Janus ; all their shape
Spangled with eyes more numerous than those 130
Of Argus, and more wakeful than to drowse,
Charmed with Arcadian pipe, the pastoral reed
Of Hermes, or his opiate rod. Meanwhile,
To resalute the World with sacred light,
Leucothea waked, and with fresh dewes embalmed
The Earth, when Adam and first matron Eve
Had ended now their orisons, and found
Strength added from above, new hope to spring
Out of despair, joy, but with fear yet linked ;
Which thus to Eve his welcome words renewed :— 140

"Eve, easily may faith admit that all
The good which we enjoy from Heaven descends ;
But that from us aught should ascend to Heaven
So prevalent as to concern the mind
Of God high-blest, or to incline his will,
Hard to believe may seem. Yet this will prayer,
Or one short sigh of human breath, upborne
Even to the seat of God. For, since I sought
By prayer the offended Deity to appease,
Kneeled and before him humbled all my heart, 150
Methought I saw him placable and mild,
Bending his ear ; persuasion in me grew
That I was heard with favour ; peace returned
Home to my breast, and to my memory
His promise that thy seed shall bruise our Hee ;

Which, then not minded in dismay, yet now
Assures me that the bitterness of death
Is past, and we shall live. Whence hail to thee !
Eve rightly called, Mother of all Mankind,
Mother of all things living, since by thee 160
Man is to live, and all things live for Man."

To whom thus Eve, with sad demeanour meek :—
" Ill-worthy I such title should belong
To me transgressor, who, for thee ordained
A help, became thy snare ; to me reproach
Rather belongs, distrust and all dispraise.
But infinite in pardon was my Judge,
That I, who first brought death on all, am graced
The source of life ; next favourable thou,
Who highly thus to entitle me voutsaf'st, 170
Far other name deserving. But the field
To labour calls us, now with sweat imposed,
Though after sleepless night ; for see ! the Morn,
All unconcerned with our unrest, begins
Her rosy progress smiling. Let us forth,
I never from thy side henceforth to stray,
Where'er our day's work lies, though now enjoined
Laborious, till day droop. While here we dwell,
What can be toilsome in these pleasant walks ?
Here let us live, though in fallen state, content." 180

So spake, so wished, much-humbled Eve ; but Fate
Subscribed not. Nature first gave signs, impressed
On bird, beast, air—air suddenly eclipsed,
After short blush of morn. Nigh in her sight
The bird of Jove, stooped from his aery tour,
Two birds of gayest plume before him drove ;
Down from a hill the beast that reigns in woods,
First hunter then, pursued a gentle brace,
Goodliest of all the forest, hart and hind ;
Direct to the eastern gate was bent their flight. 190

Adam observed, and, with his eye the chase
Pursuing, not unmoved to Eve thus spake :—

“ O Eve, some further change awaits us nigh,
Which Heaven by these mute signs in Nature shows,
Forerunners of his purpose, or to warn
Us, haply too secure of our discharge
From penalty because from death released
Some days : how long, and what till then our life,
Who knows, or more than this, that we are dust,
And thither must return, and be no more ? 200
Why else this double object in our sight,
Of flight pursued in the air and o’er the ground
One way the self-same hour ? Why in the east
Darkness ere day’s mid-course, and morning-light
More orient in yon western cloud, that draws
O’er the blue firmament a radiant white,
And slow descends, with something Heavenly fraught ? ”

He erred not ; for, by this, the Heavenly bands
Down from a sky of jasper lighted now
In Paradise, and on a hill made halt— 210
A glorious apparition, had not doubt
And carnal fear that day dimmed Adam’s eye.
Not that more glorious, when the Angels met
Jacob in Mahanaim, where he saw
The field pavilioned with his guardians bright ;
Nor that which on the flaming mount appeared
In Dothan, covered with a camp of fire,
Against the Syrian king, who, to surprise
One man, assassin-like, had levied war,
War unproclaimed. The princely Hierarchy 220
In their bright stand there left his Powers to seize
Possession of the Garden ; he alone,
To find where Adam sheltered, took his way,
Not unperceived of Adam ; who to Eve,
While the great visitant approached, thus spake :

“Eve, now expect great tidings, which, perhaps,
Of us will soon determine, or impose
New laws to be observed ; for I descry,
From yonder blazing cloud that veils the hill,
One of the Heavenly host, and, by his gait, 230
None of the meanest—some great Potentate
Or of the Thrones above, such majesty
Invests him coming ; yet not terrible,
That I should fear, nor sociably mild,
As Raphael, that I should much confide,
But solemn and sublime ; whom, not to offend,
With reverence I must meet, and thou retire.”

He ended ; and the Archangel soon drew nigh,
Not in his shape celestial, but as man
Clad to meet man. Over his lucid arms 240
A military vest of purple flowed,
Livelier than Melibœan, or the grain
Of Sarra, worn by kings and heroes old
In time of truce ; Iris had dipt the woof.
His starry helm unbuckled showed him prime
In manhood where youth ended ; by his side,
As in a glistening zodiac, hung the sword,
Satan's dire dread, and in his hand the spear.
Adam bowed low ; he, kingly, from his state
Inclined not, but his coming thus declared :— 250

“Adam, Heaven's high behest no preface needs.
Sufficient that thy prayers are heard, and Death,
Then due by sentence when thou didst transgress,
Defeated of his seizure many days,
Given thee of Grace, wherein thou may'st repent,
And one bad act with many deeds well done
May'st cover. Well may then thy Lord, appeased,
Redeem thee quite from Death's rapacious claim ;
But longer in this Paradise to dwell
Permits not. To remove thee I am come, 260

And send thee from the Garden forth, to till
The ground whence thou wast taken, fitter soil."

He added not ; for Adam, at the news
Heart-strook, with chilling gripe of sorrow stood;
That all his senses bound ; Eve, who unseen
Yet all had heard, with audible lament
Discovered soon the place of her retire :—

" O unexpected stroke, worse than of Death !
Must I thus leave thee, Paradise ? thus leave
Thee, native soil ? these happy walks and shades, 270
Fit haunt of Gods, where I had hope to spend,
Quiet, though sad, the respite of that day
That must be mortal to us both ? O flowers,
That never will in other climate grow,
My early visitation, and my last
At even, which I bred up with tender hand
From the first opening bud, and gave ye names,
Who now shall rear ye to the Sun, or rank
Your tribes, and water from the ambrosial fount ?
Thee, lastly, nuptial bower, by me adorned 280
With what to sight or smell was sweet, from thee
How shall I part, and whither wander down
Into a lower world, to this obscure
And wild ? How shall we breathe in other air
Less pure, accustomed to immortal fruits ? "

Whom thus the Angel interrupted mild :—

" Lament not, Eve, but patiently resign
What justly thou hast lost ; nor set thy heart,
Thus over-fond, on that which is not thine.
Thy going is not lonely ; with thee goes 290
Thy husband ; him to follow thou art bound ;
Where he abides, think there thy native soil."

Adam, by this from the cold sudden damp
Recovering, and his scattered spirits returned,
To Michael thus his humble words addressed :—

“Celestial, whether among the Thrones, or named
Of them the highest—for such of shape may seem
Prince above princes—gently hast thou told
Thy message, which might else in telling wound,
And in performing end us. What besides 300
Of sorrow, and dejection, and despair,
Our frailty can sustain, thy tidings bring—
Departure from this happy place, our sweet
Recess, and only consolation left
Familiar to our eyes ; all places else
Inhospitable appear, and desolate,
Nor knowing us, nor known. And, if by prayer
Incessant I could hope to change the will
Of Him who all things can, I would not cease
To weary him with my assiduous cries ; 310
But prayer against his absolute decree
No more avails than breath against the wind,
Blown stifling back on him that breathes it forth :
Therefore to his great bidding I submit.
This most afflicts me—that, departing hence,
As from his face I shall be hid, deprived
His blessed countenance. Here I could frequent,
With worship, place by place where he voutsafed
Presence Divine, and to my sons relate,
‘On this mount He appeared ; under this tree 320
Stood visible ; among these pines his voice
I heard ; here with him at this fountain talked.’
So many grateful altars I would rear
Of grassy turf, and pile up every stone
Of lustre from the brook, in memory
Or monument to ages, and thereon
Offer sweet-smelling gums, and fruits, and flowers.
In yonder nether world where shall I seek
His bright appearances, or footstep trace ?
For, though I fled him angry, yet, recalled 330

To life prolonged and promised race, I now
Gladly behold though but his utmost skirts
Of glory, and far off his steps adore."

To whom thus Michael, with regard benign :—
"Adam, thou know'st Heaven his, and all the Earth,
Not this rock only ; his omnipresence fills
Land, sea, and air, and every kind that lives,
Fomented by his virtual power and warmed.
All the Earth he gave thee to possess and rule,
No despicable gift ; surmise not, then, 340
His presence to these narrow bounds confined
Of Paradise or Eden. This had been
Perhaps thy capital seat, from whence had spread
All generations, and had hither come,
From all the ends of the Earth, to celebrate
And reverence thee their great progenitor.
But this pre-eminence thou hast lost, brought down
To dwell on even ground now with thy sons :
Yet doubt not but in valley and in plain
God is, as here, and will be found alike 350
Present, and of his presence many a sign
Still following thee, still compassing thee round
With goodness and paternal love, his face
Express, and of his steps the track divine.
Which that thou may'st believe, and be confirmed
Ere thou from hence depart, know I am sent
To show thee what shall come in future days
To thee and to thy offspring. Good with bad
Expect to hear, supernal grace contending
With sinfulness of men—thereby to learn 360
True patience, and to temper joy with fear
And pious sorrow, equally inured
By moderation either state to bear,
Prosperous or adverse : so shalt thou lead
Safest thy life, and best prepared endure

Thy mortal passage when it comes. Ascend
This hill ; let Eve (for I have drenched her eyes)
Here sleep below while thou to foresight wak'st,
As once thou slept'st while she to life was formed."

To whom thus Adam gratefully replied :— 370
" Ascend ; I follow thee, safe guide, the path
Thou lead'st me, and to the hand of Heaven submit,
However chastening—to the evil turn
My obvious breast, arming to overcome
By suffering, and earn rest from labour won,
If so I may attain." So both ascend
In the visions of God. It was a hill,
Of Paradise the highest, from whose top
The hemisphere of Earth in clearest ken
Stretched out to the amplest reach of prospect lay. 380
Not higher that hill, nor wider looking round,
Whereon for different cause the Tempter set
Our second Adam, in the wilderness,
To show him all Earth's kingdoms and their glory.
His eye might there command wherever stood
City of old or modern fame, the seat
Of mightiest empire, from the destined walls
Of Cambalu, seat of Cathaian Can,
And Samarchand by Oxus, Temir's throne,
To Paquin, of Sinæan kings, and thence 390
To Agra and Lahor of Great Mogul,
Down to the golden Chersonese, or where
The Persian in Ecbatan sat, or since
In Hispahan, or where the Russian Ksar
In Mosco, or the Sultan in Bizance,
Turchestan-born ; nor could his eye not ken
The empire of Negus to his utmost port
Ercoco, and the less maritime kings,
Mombaza, and Quiloa, and Melind,
And Sofala (thought Ophir), to the realm 400

Of Congo, and Angola farthest south,
Or thence from Niger flood to Atlas mount,
The kingdoms of Almansor, Fez and Sus,
Marocco, and Algiers, and Tremisen ;
On Europe thence, and where Rome was to sway
The world : in spirit perhaps he also saw
Rich Mexico, the seat of Montezume,
And Cusco in Peru, the richer seat
Of Atabalipa, and yet unspoiled
Guiana, whose great city Geryon's sons 410
Call El Dorado. But to nobler sights
Michael from Adam's eyes the film removed
Which that false fruit that promised clearer sight
Had bred ; then purged with euphrasy and rue
The visual nerve, for he had much to see,
And from the well of life three drops instilled.
So deep the power of these ingredients pierced,
Even to the inmost seat of mental sight,
That Adam, now enforced to close his eyes,
Sunk down, and all his spirits became entranced. 420
But him the gentle Angel by the hand
Soon raised, and his attention thus recalled :—

“ Adam, now ope thine eyes, and first behold
The effects which thy original crime hath wrought
In some to spring from thee, who never touched
The excepted tree, nor with the Snake conspired,
Nor sinned thy sin, yet from that sin derive
Corruption to bring forth more violent deeds.”

His eyes he opened, and beheld a field,
Part arable and tilth, whereon were sheaves 430
New-reaped, the other part sheep-walks and folds ;
I' the midst an altar as the landmark stood,
Rustic, of grassy sord. Thither anon
A sweaty reaper from his tillage brought
First-fruits, the green ear and the yellow sheaf,

Unculled, as came to hand. A shepherd next,
More meek, came with the firstlings of his flock,
Choicest and best ; then, sacrificing, laid
The inwards and their fat, with incense strewed,
On the cleft wood, and all due rites performed. 440
His offering soon propitious fire from heaven
Consumed, with nimble glance and grateful steam ;
The other's not, for his was not sincere :
Whereat he inly raged, and, as they talked,
Smote him into the midriff with a stone
That beat out life ; he fell, and, deadly pale,
Groaned out his soul, with gushing blood effused.
Much at that sight was Adam in his heart
Dismayed, and thus in haste to the Angel cried :—

“ O Teacher, some great mischief hath befallen 450
To that meek man, who well had sacrificed :
Is piety thus and pure devotion paid ? ”

To whom Michael thus, he also moved, replied :—
“ These two are brethren, Adam, and to come
Out of thy loins. The unjust the just hath slain,
For envy that his brother's offering found
From Heaven acceptance ; but the bloody fact
Will be avenged, and the other's faith approved
Lose no reward, though here thou see him die,
Rolling in dust and gore.” To which our Sire :— 460

“ Alas, both for the deed and for the cause !
But have I now seen Death ? Is this the way
I must return to native dust ? O sight
Of terror, foul and ugly to behold !
Horrid to think, how horrible to feel ! ”

To whom thus Michaël :—“ Death thou hast seen
In his first shape on Man ; but many shapes
(Of Death, and many are the ways that lead
To his grim cave—all dismal, yet to sense
More terrible at the entrance than within. 470

Some, as thou saw'st, by violent stroke shall die,
By fire, flood, famine ; by intemperance more
In meats and drinks, which on the Earth shall bring
Diseases dire, of which a monstrous crew
Before thee shall appear, that thou may'st know
What misery the inabstinence of Eve
Shall bring on men." Immediately a place
Before his eyes appeared, sad, noisome, dark ;
A lazarus-house it seemed, wherein were laid
Numbers of all diseased—all maladies 480
Of ghastly spasm, or racking torture, qualms
Of heart-sick agony, all feverous kinds,
Convulsions, epilepsies, fierce catarrhs,
Intestine stone and ulcer, colic pangs,
Demoniac phrenzy, moping melancholy,
And moon-struck madness, pining atrophy,
Marasmus, and wide-wasting pestilence,
Dropsies and asthmas, and joint-racking rheums.
Dire was the tossing, deep the groans ; Despair
Tended the sick, busiest from couch to couch ; 490
And over them triumphant Death his dart
Shook, but delayed to strike, though oft invoked
With vows, as their chief good and final hope.
Sight so deform what heart of rock could long
Dry-eyed behold ? Adam could not, but wept,
Though not of woman born : compassion quelled
His best of man, and gave him up to tears
A space, till firmer thoughts restrained excess,
And, scarce recovering words, his plaint renewed :—
" O miserable Mankind, to what fall 500
Degraded, to what wretched state reserved !
Better end here unborn. Why is life given
To be thus wrested from us ? rather why
Obtruded on us thus ? who, if we knew
What we receive, would either not accept

Life offered, or soon beg to lay it down,
Glad to be so dismissed in peace. Can thus
The image of God in Man, created once
So goodly and erect, though faulty since,
To such unsightly sufferings be debased 510
Under inhuman pains? Why should not Man,
Retaining still divine similitude
In part, from such deformities be free,
And for his Maker's image' sake exempt?"

"Their Maker's image," answered Michael, "then
Forsook them, when themselves they vilified
To serve ungoverned Appetite, and took
His image whom they served—a brutish vice,
Inductive mainly to the sin of Eve.
Therefore so abject is their punishment, 520
Disfiguring not God's likeness, but their own ;
Or, if his likeness, by themselves defaced
While they pervert pure Nature's healthful rules
To loathsome sickness—worthily, since they
God's image did not reverence in themselves."

"I yield it just," said Adam, "and submit.
But is there yet no other way, besides
These painful passages, how we may come
To death, and mix with our connatural dust?"

"There is," said Michael, "if thou well observe 530
The rule of *Not too much*, by temperance taught
In what thou eat'st and drink'st, seeking from thence
Due nourishment, not gluttonous delight,
Till many years over thy head return.
So may'st thou live, till, like ripe fruit, thou drop
Into thy mother's lap, or be with ease
Gathered, not harshly plucked, for death mature.
This is old age ; but then thou must outlive
Thy youth, thy strength, thy beauty, which will change
To withered, weak, and grey ; thy senses then, 540

Obtuse, all taste of pleasure must forgo
To what thou hast ; and, for the air of youth,
Hopeful and cheerful, in thy blood will reign
A melancholy damp of cold and dry,
To weigh thy spirits down, and last consume
The balm of life." To whom our Ancestor :—

"Henceforth I fly not death, nor would prolong
Life much—bent rather how I may be quit,
Fairest and easiest, of this cumbrous charge,
Which I must keep till my appointed day 550
Of rendering up, and patiently attend
My dissolution." Michael replied :—

"Nor love thy life, nor hate ; but what thou liv'st
Live well ; how long or short permit to Heaven.
And now prepare thee for another sight."

He looked, and saw a spacious plain, whereon
Were tents of various hue : by some were herds
Of cattle grazing : others whence the sound
Of instruments that made melodious chime
Was heard, of harp and organ, and who moved 560
Their stops and chords was seen : his volant touch
Instinct through all proportions low and high
Fled and pursued transverse the resonant fugue.
In other part stood one who, at the forge
Labouring, two massy clods of iron and brass
Had melted (whether found where casual fire
Had wasted woods, on mountain or in vale,
Down to the veins of earth, thence gliding hot
To some cave's mouth, or whether washed by stream
From underground) ; the liquid ore he drained 570
Into fit moulds prepared ; from which he formed
First his own tools, then what might else be wrought
Fusile or graven in metal. After these,
But on the hither side, a different sort
From the high neighbouring hills, which was their seat,

Down to the plain descended : by their guise
Just men they seemed, and all their study bent
To worship God aright, and know his works
Not hid ; nor those things last which might preserve
Freedom and peace to men. They on the plain 580
Long had not walked when from the tents behold
A bevy of fair women, richly gay
In gems and wanton dress ! to the harp they sung
Soft amorous ditties, and in dance came on.
The men, though grave, eyed them, and let their eyes
Rove without rein, till, in the amorous net
Fast caught, they liked, and each his liking chose.
And now of love they treat, till the evening-star,
Love's harbinger, appeared ; then, all in heat,
They light the nuptial torch, and bid invoke 590
Hymen, then first to marriage rites invoked :
With feast and music all the tents resound.
Such happy interview, and fair event
Of love and youth not lost, songs, garlands, flowers,
And charming symphonies, attached the heart
Of Adam, soon inclined to admit delight,
The bent of Nature ; which he thus expressed :—
" True opener of mine eyes, prime Angel blest,
Much better seems this vision, and more hope
Of peaceful days portends, than those two past : 600
Those were of hate and death, or pain much worse ;
Here Nature seems fulfilled in all her ends."
To whom thus Michael :—" Judge not what is best
By pleasure, though to Nature seeming meet,
Created, as thou art, to nobler end,
Holy and pure, conformity divine.
Those tents thou saw'st so pleasant were the tents
Of wickedness, wherein shall dwell his race
Who slew his brother : studious they appear
Of arts that polish life, inventors rare ; 610

Unmindful of their Maker, though his Spirit
Taught them ; but they his gifts acknowledged none.
Yet they a beauteous offspring shall beget ;
For that fair female troop thou saw'st, that seemed
Of goddesses, so blithe, so smooth, so gay,
Yet empty of all good wherein consists
Woman's domestic honour and chief praise ;
Bred only and completed to the taste
Of lustful appetite, to sing, to dance,
To dress, and troll the tongue, and roll the eye ;— 620
To these that sober race of men, whose lives
Religious titled them the Sons of God,
Shall yield up all their virtue, all their fame,
Ignobly, to the trains and to the smiles
Of these fair atheists, and now swim in joy
(Erelong to swim at large) and laugh ; for which
The world erelong a world of tears must weep."

To whom thus Adam, of short joy bereft :—
" O pity and shame, that they who to live well
Entered so fair should turn aside to tread 630
Paths indirect, or in the midway faint !
But still I see the tenor of Man's woe
Holds on the same, from Woman to begin."

" From Man's effeminate slackness it begins,"
Said the Angel, " who should better hold his place
By wisdom, and superior gifts received.
But now prepare thee for another scene."

He looked, and saw wide territory spread
Before him—towns, and rural works between,
Cities of men with lofty gates and towers, 640
Concourse in arms, fierce faces threatening war,
Giants of mighty bone and bold emprise.
Part wield their arms, part curb the foaming steed,
Single or in array of battle ranged
Both horse and foot, nor idly mustering stood.

One way a band select from forage drives
A herd of beeves, fair oxen and fair kine,
From a fat meadow-ground, or fleecy flock,
Ewes and their bleating lambs, over the plain,
Their booty ; scarce with life the shepherds fly, 650
But call in aid, which makes a bloody fray :
With cruel tournament the squadrons join ;
Where cattle pastured late, now scattered lies
With carcasses and arms the ensanguined field
Deserted. Others to a city strong
Lay siege, encamped, by battery, scale, and mine,
Assaulting ; others from the wall defend
With dart and javelin, stones and sulphurous fire ;
On each hand slaughter and gigantic deeds.
In other part the sceptred haralds call 660
To council in the city-gates : anon
Grey-headed men and grave, with warriors mixed,
Assemble, and harangues are heard ; but soon
In factious opposition, till at last
Of middle age one rising, eminent
In wise deport, spake much of right and wrong,
Of justice, of religion, truth, and peace,
And judgment from above : him old and young
Exploded, and had seized with violent hands,
Had not a cloud descending snatched him thence, 670
Unseen amid the throng. So violence
Proceeded, and oppression, and sword-law,
Through all the plain, and refuge none was found.
Adam was all in tears, and to his guide
Lamenting turned full sad :—" Oh, what are these ?
Death's ministers, not men ! who thus deal death
Inhumanly to men, and multiply
Ten thousandfold the sin of him who slew
His brother ; for of whom such massacre
Make they but of their brethren, men of men ? 680

But who was that just man, whom had not Heaven
Rescued, had in his righteousness been lost ?”

To whom thus Michael :—“ These are the product
Of those ill-mated marriages thou saw’st,
Where good with bad were matched ; who of themselves
Abhor to join, and, by imprudence mixed,
Produce prodigious births of body or mind.
Such were these Giants, men of high renown ;
For in those days might only shall be admired,
And valour and heroic virtue called.

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To overcome in battle, and subdue
Nations, and bring home spoils with infinite
Manslaughter, shall be held the highest pitch
Of human glory, and, for glory done,
Of triumph to be styled great conquerors,
Patrons of mankind, gods, and sons of gods—
Destroyers rightlier called, and plagues of men.
Thus fame shall be achieved, renown on earth,
And what most merits fame in silence hid.
But he, the seventh from thee, whom thou beheld’st 700
The only righteous in a world perverse,
And therefore hated, therefore so beset
With foes, for daring single to be just,
And utter odious truth, that God would come
To judge them with his Saints—him the Most High,
Rapt in a balmy cloud, with wingèd steeds,
Did, as thou saw’st, receive, to walk with God
High in salvation and the climes of bliss,
Exempt from death, to show thee what reward
Awaits the good, the rest what punishment ; 710
Which now direct thine eyes and soon behold.”

He looked, and saw the face of things quite changed.
The brazen throat of war had ceased to roar ;
All now was turned to jollity and game,
To luxury and riot, feast and dance,

Marrying or prostituting, as befell,
Rape or adultery, where passing fair
Allured them ; thence from cups to civil broils.
At length a reverend sire among them came,
And of their doings great dislike declared, 720
And testified against their ways. He oft
Frequented their assemblies, whereso met,
Triumphs or festivals, and to them preached
Conversion and repentance, as to souls
In prison, under judgments imminent ;
But all in vain. Which when he saw, he ceased
Contending, and removed his tents far off ;
Then, from the mountain hewing timber tall,
Began to build a vessel of huge bulk,
Measured by cubit, length, and breadth, and highth, 730
Smeared round with pitch, and in the side a door
Contrived, and of provisions laid in large
For man and beast : when lo ! a wonder strange !
Of every beast, and bird, and insect small,
Came sevens and pairs, and entered in, as taught
Their order ; last, the sire and his three sons,
With their four wives ; and God made fast the door.
Meanwhile the South-wind rose, and, with black wings
Wide-hovering, all the clouds together drove
From under heaven ; the hills to their supply 740
Vapour, and exhalation dusk and moist,
Sent up amain ; and now the thickened sky
Like a dark ceiling stood : down rushed the rain
Impetuous, and continued till the earth
No more was seen. The floating vessel swum
Uplifted, and secure with beakèd prow
Rode tilting o'er the waves ; all dwellings else
Flood overwhelmed, and them with all their pomp
Deep under water rolled ; sea covered sea,
Sea without shore : and in their palaces, 750

Where luxury late reigned, sea-monsters whelped
And stabled : of mankind, so numerous late,
All left in one small bottom swum embarked.
How did'st thou grieve then, Adam, to behold
The end of all thy offspring, end so sad,
Depopulation ! Thee another flood,
Of tears and sorrow a flood thee also drowned,
And sunk thee as thy sons ; till, gently reared
By the Angel, on thy feet thou stood'st at last,
Though comfortless, as when a father mourns 760
His children, all in view destroyed at once,
And scarce to the Angel utter'dst thus thy plaint :—

“ O visions ill foreseen ! Better had I
Lived ignorant of future—so had borne
My part of evil only, each day's lot
Enough to bear. Those now that were dispensed
The burden of many ages on me light
At once, by my foreknowledge gaining birth
Abortive, to torment me, ere their being,
With thought that they must be. Let no man seek 770
Henceforth to be foretold what shall befall
Him or his children—evil, he may be sure,
Which neither his foreknowing can prevent,
And he the future evil shall no less
In apprehension than in substance feel
Grievous to bear. But that care now is past ;
Man is not whom to warn ; those few escaped
Famine and anguish will at last consume,
Wandering that watery desert. I had hope,
When violence was ceased and war on Earth, 780
All would have then gone well, peace would have
crowned

With length of happy days the race of Man ;
But I was far deceived, for now I see
Peace to corrupt no less than war to waste.

How comes it thus? Unfold, Celestial Guide,
And whether here the race of Man will end."

To whom thus Michael:—"Those whom last thou
saw'st

In triumph and luxurious wealth are they
First seen in acts of prowess eminent
And great exploits, but of true virtue void ; 790
Who, having spilt much blood, and done much waste,
Subduing nations, and achieved thereby
Fame in the world, high titles, and rich prey,
Shall change their course to pleasure, ease, and sloth,
Surfeit, and lust, till wantonness and pride
Raise out of friendship hostile deeds in peace.
The conquered, also, and enslaved by war,
Shall, with their freedom lost, all virtue lose,
And fear of God—from whom their piety feigned
In sharp contest of battle found no aid 800
Against invaders ; therefore, cooled in zeal,
Thenceforth shall practise how to live secure,
Worldly or dissolute, on what their lords
Shall leave them to enjoy ; for the Earth shall bear
More than enough, that temperance may be tried.
So all shall turn degenerate, all depraved,
Justice and temperance, truth and faith, forgot ;
One man except, the only son of light
In a dark age, against example good,
Against allurements, custom, and a world 810
Offended. Fearless of reproach and scorn,
Or violence, he of their wicked ways
Shall them admonish, and before them set
The paths of righteousness, how much more safe
And full of peace, denouncing wrath to come
On their impenitence, and shall return
Of them derided, but of God observed
The one just man alive : by his command

Shall build a wondrous ark, as thou beheld'st,
To save himself and household from amidst 820
A world devote to universal wrack.

No sooner he, with them of man and beast
Select for life, shall in the ark be lodged
And sheltered round, but all the cataracts
Of Heaven set open on the Earth shall pour
Rain day and night ; all fountains of the deep,
Broke up, shall heave the ocean to usurp
Beyond all bounds, till inundation rise
Above the highest hills. Then shall this Mount
Of Paradise by might of waves be moved 830
Out of his place, pushed by the hornèd flood,
With all his verdure spoiled, and trees adrift,
Down the great river to the opening Gulf,
And there take root, an island salt and bare,
The haunt of seals, and orcs, and sea-mews' clang—
To teach thee that God attributes to place
No sanctity, if none be thither brought
By men who there frequent or therein dwell.
And now what further shall ensue behold."

He looked, and saw the ark hull on the flood, 840
Which now abated ; for the clouds were fled,
Driven by a keen North-wind that, blowing dry,
Wrinkled the face of deluge, as decayed ;
And the clear sun on his wide watery glass
Gazed hot, and of the fresh wave largely drew,
As after thirst ; which made their flowing shrink
From standing lake to tripping ebb, that stole
With soft foot towards the deep, who now had stopt
His sluices, as the heaven his windows shut.
The ark no more now floats, but seems on ground, 850
Fast on the top of some high mountain fixed.
And now the tops of hills as rocks appear ;
With clamour thence the rapid currents drive

Towards the retreating sea their furious tide.
Forthwith from out the ark a raven flies,
And, after him, the surer messenger,
A dove, sent forth once and again to spy
Green tree or ground whereon his foot may light ;
The second time returning, in his bill
An olive-leaf he brings, pacific sign. 860
Anon dry ground appears, and from his ark
The ancient sire descends, with all his train ;
Then, with uplifted hands and eyes devout,
Grateful to Heaven, over his head beholds
A dewy cloud, and in the cloud a bow
Conspicuous with three listed colours gay,
Betokening peace from God, and covenant new.
Whereat the heart of Adam, erst so sad,
Greatly rejoiced ; and thus his joy broke forth :—

“ O thou, who future things canst represent 870
As present, Heavenly Instructor, I revive
At this last sight, assured that Man shall live,
With all the creatures, and their seed preserve.
Far less I now lament for one whole world
Of wicked sons destroyed than I rejoice
For one man found so perfect and so just
That God voutsafes to raise another world
From him, and all his anger to forget.
But say what mean those coloured streaks in Heaven :
Distended as the brow of God appeased ? 880
Or serve they as a flowery verge to bind
The fluid skirts of that same watery cloud,
Lest it again dissolve and shower the Earth ? ”

To whom the Archangel :—“ Dextrously thou aim'st.
So willingly doth God remit his ire :
Though late repenting him of Man depraved,
Grieved at his heart, when, looking down, he saw
The whole Earth filled with violence, and all flesh

Corrupting each their way ; yet, those removed,
Such grace shall one just man find in his sight 890
That he relents, not to blot out mankind,
And makes a covenant never to destroy
The Earth again by flood, nor let the sea
Surpass his bounds, nor rain to drown the world
With man therein or beast ; but, when he brings
Over the Earth a cloud, will therein set
His triple-coloured bow, whereon to look
And call to mind his covenant. Day and night,
Seed-time and harvest, heat and hoary frost,
Shall hold their course, till fire purge all things new, 900
Both Heaven and Earth, wherein the just shall dwell."

PARADISE LOST

BOOK XII

THE ARGUMENT

The Angel Michael continues, from the Flood, to relate what shall succeed ; then, in the mention of Abraham, comes by degrees to explain who that Seed of the Woman shall be which was promised Adam and Eve in the Fall : his incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension ; the state of the Church till his second coming. Adam, greatly satisfied and recomforted by these relations and promises, descends the hill with Michael ; wakens Eve, who all this while had slept, but with gentle dreams composed to quietness of mind and submission. Michael in either hand leads them out of Paradise, the fiery sword waving behind them, and the Cherubim taking their stations to guard the place.

As one who, in his journey, baits at noon,
Though bent on speed, so here the Archangel paused
Betwixt the world destroyed and world restored,
If Adam aught perhaps might interpose ;
Then, with transition sweet, new speech resumes :—

“ Thus thou hast seen one world begin and end,
And Man as from a second stock proceed.
Much thou hast yet to see ; but I perceive
Thy mortal sight to fail ; objects divine
Must needs impair and weary human sense. 10
Henceforth what is to come I will relate ;
Thou, therefore, give due audience, and attend.

“ This second source of men, while yet but few,
And while the dread of judgment past remains
Fresh in their minds, fearing the Deity,

With some regard to what is just and right
Shall lead their lives, and multiply apace,
Labouring the soil, and reaping plenteous crop,
Corn, wine, and oil ; and, from the herd or flock
Oft sacrificing bullock, lamb, or kid, 20
With large wine-offerings poured, and sacred feast,
Shall spend their days in joy unblamed, and dwell
Long time in peace, by families and tribes,
Under paternal rule, till one shall rise,
Of proud, ambitious heart, who, not content
With fair equality, fraternal state,
Will arrogate dominion undeserved
Over his brethren, and quite dispossess
Concord and law of Nature from the Earth—
Hunting (and men, not beasts, shall be his game) 30
With war and hostile snare such as refuse
Subjection to his empire tyrannous.
A mighty hunter thence he shall be styled
Before the Lord, as in despite of Heaven,
Or from Heaven claiming second sovereignty,
And from rebellion shall derive his name,
Though of rebellion others he accuse.
He, with a crew, whom like ambition joins
With him or under him to tyrannise,
Marching from Eden towards the west, shall find 40
The plain, wherein a black bituminous gurge
Boils out from under ground, the mouth of Hell.
Of brick, and of that stuff, they cast to build
A city and tower, whose top may reach to Heaven,
And get themselves a name, lest, far dispersed
In foreign lands, their memory be lost—
Regardless whether good or evil fame.
But God, who oft descends to visit men
Unseen, and through their habitations walks,
To mark their doings, them beholding soon, 50

Comes down to see their city, ere the tower
Obstruct Heaven-towers, and in derision sets
Upon their tongues a various spirit, to rase
Quite out their native language, and, instead,
To sow a jangling noise of words unknown.
Forthwith a hideous gabble rises loud
Among the builders ; each to other calls,
Not understood—till, hoarse and all in rage,
As mocked they storm. Great laughter was in Heaven,
And looking down to see the hubbub strange 60
And hear the din. Thus was the building left
Ridiculous, and the work *Confusion* named."

Whereto thus Adam, fatherly displeased :—

"O execrable son, so to aspire
Above his brethren, to himself assuming
Authority usurped, from God not given !
He gave us only over beast, fish, fowl,
Dominion absolute ; that right we hold
By his donation : but man over men
He made not lord—such title to himself 70
Reserving, human left from human free.
But this usurper his encroachment proud
Stays not on Man ; to God his tower intends
Siege and defiance. Wretched man ! what food
Will he convey up thither, to sustain
Himself and his rash army, where thin air
Above the clouds will pine his entrails gross,
And famish him of breath, if not of bread ?"

To whom thus Michael :—"Justly thou abhorr'st
That son, who on the quiet state of men 80
Such trouble brought, affecting to subdue
Rational liberty ; yet know withal,
Since thy original lapse, true liberty
Is lost, which always with right reason dwells
Twinned, and from her hath no dividual being.

Reason in Man obscured, or not obeyed,
Immediately inordinate desires
And upstart passions catch the government
From Reason, and to servitude reduce
Man, till then free. Therefore, since he permits 90
Within himself unworthy powers to reign
Over free reason, God, in judgment just,
Subjects him from without to violent lords,
Who oft as undeservedly enthrall
His outward freedom. Tyranny must be,
Though to the tyrant thereby no excuse.
Yet sometimes nations will decline so low
From virtue, which is reason, that no wrong,
But justice and some fatal curse annexed,
Deprives them of their outward liberty, 100
Their inward lost: witness the irreverent son
Of him who built the ark, who, for the shame
Done to his father, heard this heavy curse,
Servant of servants, on his vicious race.
Thus will this latter, as the former world,
Still tend from bad to worse, till God at last,
Wearied with their iniquities, withdraw
His presence from among them, and avert
His holy eyes, resolving from thenceforth
To leave them to their own polluted ways, 110
And one peculiar nation to select
From all the rest, of whom to be invoked—
A nation from one faithful man to spring.
Him on this side Euphrates yet residing,
Bred up in idol-worship—Oh, that men
(Canst thou believe?) should be so stupid grown,
While yet the patriarch lived who scaped the Flood,
As to forsake the living God, and fall
To worship their own work in wood and stone
For gods!—yet him God the Most High voutsafes 120

To call by vision from his father's house,
His kindred, and false gods, into a land
Which he will show him, and from him will raise
A mighty nation, and upon him shower
His benediction so that in his seed
All nations shall be blest. He straight obeys ;
Not knowing to what land, yet firm believes.
I see him, but thou canst not, with what faith
He leaves his gods, his friends, and native soil,
Ur of Chaldæa, passing now the ford 130
To Haran—after him a cumbrous train
Of herds and flocks, and numerous servitude—
Not wandering poor, but trusting all his wealth
With God, who called him, in a land unknown.
Canaan he now attains ; I see his tents
Pitched about Sechem, and the neighbouring plain
Of Morch. There, by promise, he receives
Gift to his progeny of all that land,
From Hamath northward to the Desert south
(Things by their names I call, though yet unnamed),
From Hermon east to the great western sea ; 141
Mount Hermon, yonder sea, each place behold
In prospect, as I point them : on the shore,
Mount Carmel ; here, the double-founted stream,
Jordan, true limit eastward ; but his sons
Shall dwell to Senir, that long ridge of hills.
This ponder, that all nations of the Earth
Shall in his seed be blessed. By that seed
Is meant thy great Deliverer, who shall bruise
The Serpent's head ; whereof to thee anon 150
Plainlier shall be revealed. This patriarch blest,
Whom *faithful Abraham* due time shall call,
A son, and of his son a grandchild, leaves,
Like him in faith, in wisdom, and renown.
The grandchild, with twelve sons increased, departs

From Canaan to a land hereafter called
Egypt, divided by the river Nile ;
See where it flows, disgorging at seven mouths
Into the sea. To sojourn in that land
He comes, invited by a younger son 160
In time of dearth—a son whose worthy deeds
Raise him to be the second in that realm
Of Pharaoh. There he dies, and leaves his race
Growing into a nation, and now grown
Suspected to a sequent king, who seeks
To stop their overgrowth, as inmate guests
Too numerous ; whence of guests he makes them slaves
Inhospitably, and kills their infant males :
Till, by two brethren (those two brethren call
Moses and Aaron) sent from God to claim 170
His people from enthrallment, they return,
With glory and spoil, back to their promised land.
But first the lawless tyrant, who denies
To know their God, or message to regard,
Must be compelled by signs and judgments dire :
To blood unshed the rivers must be turned ;
Frogs, lice, and flies must all his palace fill
With loathed intrusion, and fill all the land ;
His cattle must of rot and murrain die ;
Botches and blains must all his flesh emboss, 180
And all his people ; thunder mixed with hail,
Hail mixed with fire, must rend the Egyptian sky,
And wheel on the earth, devouring where it rolls ;
What it devours not, herb, or fruit, or grain,
A darksome cloud of locusts swarming down
Must eat, and on the ground leave nothing green ;
Darkness must overshadow all his bounds,
Palpable darkness, and blot out three days ;
Last, with one midnight-stroke, all the first-born
Of Egypt must lie dead. Thus with ten wounds 190

The river-dragon tamed at length submits
To let his sojourners depart, and oft
Humbles his stubborn heart, but still as ice
More hardened after thaw ; till, in his rage
Pursuing whom he late dismissed, the sea
Swallows him with his host, but them lets pass,
As on dry land, between two crystal walls,
Awed by the rod of Moses so to stand
Divided till his rescued gain their shore :
Such wondrous power God to his Saint will lend, 200
Though present in his Angel, who shall go
Before them in a cloud, and pillar of fire—
By day a cloud, by night a pillar of fire—
To guide them in their journey, and remove
Behind them, while the obdurate king pursues.
All night he will pursue, but his approach
Darkness defends between till morning-watch ;
Then through the fiery pillar and the cloud
God looking forth will trouble all his host,
And craze their chariot-wheels : when, by command,
Moses once more his potent rod extends 211
Over the sea ; the sea his rod obeys ;
On their embattled ranks the waves return,
And overwhelm their war. The race elect
Safe towards Canaan, from the shore, advance
Through the wild Desert—not the readiest way,
Lest, entering on the Canaanite alarmed,
War terrify them inexpert, and fear
Return them back to Egypt, choosing rather
Inglorious life with servitude ; for life 220
To noble and ignoble is more sweet
Untrained in arms, where rashness leads not on.
This also shall they gain by their delay
In the wide wilderness : there they shall found
Their government, and their great Senate choose

Through the twelve tribes, to rule by laws ordained.
God, from the Mount of Sinai, whose grey top
Shall tremble, he descending, will himself,
In thunder, lightning, and loud trumpet's sound,
Ordain them laws—part, such as appertain, 230
To civil justice ; part, religious rites
Of sacrifice, informing them, by types
And shadows, of that destined Seed to bruise
The Serpent, by what means he shall achieve
Mankind's deliverance. But the voice of God
To mortal ear is dreadful : they beseech
That Moses might report to them his will,
And terror cease ; he grants what they besought,
Instructed that to God is no access
Without Mediator, whose high office now 240
Moses in figure bears, to introduce
One greater, of whose day he shall foretell,
And all the Prophets, in their age, the times
Of great Messiah shall sing. Thus laws and rites
Established, such delight hath God in men
Obedient to his will that he voutsafes
Among them to set up his tabernacle—
The Holy One with mortal men to dwell.
By his prescript a sanctuary is framed
Of cedar, overlaid with gold ; therein 250
An ark, and in the ark his testimony,
The records of his covenant ; over these
A mercy-seat of gold, between the wings
Of two bright Cherubim ; before him burn
Seven lamps, as in a zodiac representing
The heavenly fires. Over the tent a cloud
Shall rest by day, a fiery gleam by night,
Save when they journey ; and at length they come,
Conducted by his Angel, to the land
Promised to Abraham and his seed. The rest 260

Were long to tell—how many battles fought ;
How many kings destroyed, and kingdoms won ;
Or how the sun shall in mid-heaven stand still
A day entire, and night's due course adjourn,
Man's voice commanding, ' Sun, in Gibeon stand,
And thou, Moon, in the vale of Aialon,
Till *Israel* overcome ! '—so call the third
From Abraham, son of Isaac, and from him
His whole descent, who thus shall Canaan win."

Here Adam interposed :—" O sent from Heaven, 270
Enlightener of my darkness, gracious things
Thou hast revealed, those chiefly which concern
Just Abraham and his seed. Now first I find
Mine eyes true opening, and my heart much eased,
Erewhile perplexed with thoughts what would become
Of me and all mankind ; but now I see
His day, in whom all nations shall be blest—
Favour unmerited by me, who sought
Forbidden knowledge by forbidden means.
This yet I apprehend not—why to those 280
Among whom God will deign to dwell on Earth
So many and so various laws are given.
So many laws argue so many sins
Among them ; how can God with such reside ? "

To whom thus Michael :—" Doubt not but that sin
Will reign among them, as of thee begot ;
And therefore was law given them, to evince
Their natural pravity, by stirring up.
Sin against Law to fight, that, when they see
Law can discover sin, but not remove, 290
Save by those shadowy expiations weak,
The blood of bulls and goats, they may conclude
Some blood more precious must be paid for Man,
Just for unjust, that in such righteousness,
To them by faith imputed, they may find

Justification towards God, and peace
Of conscience, which the law by ceremonies
Cannot appease, nor man the moral part
Perform, and not performing cannot live.
So Law appears imperfect, and but given 300
With purpose to resign them, in full time,
Up to a better covenant, disciplined
From shadowy types to truth, from flesh to spirit,
From imposition of strict laws to free
Acceptance of large grace, from servile fear
To filial, works of law to works of faith.
And therefore shall not Moses, though of God
Highly beloved, being but the minister
Of Law, his people into Canaan lead ;
But Joshua, whom the Gentiles Jesus call, 310
His name and office bearing who shall quell
The adversary Serpent, and bring back
Through the world's wilderness long-wandered Man
Safe to eternal Paradise of rest.
Meanwhile they, in their earthly Canaan placed,
Long time shall dwell and prosper, but when sins
National interrupt their public peace,
Provoking God to raise them enemies—
From whom as oft he saves them penitent,
By Judges first, then under Kings ; of whom 320
The second, both for piety renowned
And puissant deeds, a promise shall receive
Irrevocable, that his regal throne
For ever shall endure. The like shall sing
All Prophecy—that of the royal stock
Of David (so I name this king) shall rise
A son, the Woman's Seed to thee foretold,
Foretold to Abraham as in whom shall trust
All nations, and to kings foretold of kings
The last, for of his reign shall be no end. 330

But first a long succession must ensue ;
And his next son, for wealth and wisdom famed,
The clouded ark of God, till then in tents
Wandering, shall in a glorious temple enshrine.
Such follow him as shall be registered
Part good, part bad ; of bad the longer scroll ;
Whose foul idolatries and other faults,
Heaped to the popular sum, will so incense
God, as to leave them, and expose their land,
Their city, his temple, and his holy ark, 340
With all his sacred things, a scorn and prey
To that proud city whose high walls thou saw'st
Left in confusion, Babylon thence called.
There in captivity he lets them dwell
The space of seventy years ; then brings them back,
Remembering mercy, and his covenant sworn
To David, stablished as the days of Heaven.
Returned from Babylon by leave of kings,
Their lords, whom God disposed, the house of God
They first re-edify, and for a while 350
In mean estate live moderate, till, grown
In wealth and multitude, factious they grow.
But first among the priests dissension springs—
Men who attend the altar, and should most
Endeavour peace : their strife pollution brings
Upon the temple itself ; at last they seize
The sceptre, and regard not David's sons ;
Then lose it to a stranger, that the true
Anointed King Messiah might be born
Barred of his right. Yet at his birth a star, 360
Unseen before in heaven, proclaims him come,
And guides the eastern sages, who inquire
His place, to offer incense, myrrh, and gold :
His place of birth a solemn Angel tells
To simple shepherds, keeping watch by night ;

They gladly thither haste, and by a quire
Of squadroned Angels hear his carol sung.
A Virgin is his mother, but his sire
The Power of the Most High. He shall ascend
The throne hereditary, and bound his reign 370
With Earth's wide bounds, his glory with the Heavens."

He ceased, discerning Adam with such joy
Surcharged as had, like grief, been dewed in tears,
Without the vent of words ; which these he breathed :—

"O prophet of glad tidings, finisher
Of utmost hope ! now clear I understand
What oft my steadiest thoughts have searched in vain—
Why our great Expectation should be called
The Seed of Woman. Virgin Mother, hail !
High in the love of Heaven, yet from my loins 380
Thou shalt proceed, and from thy womb the Son
Of God Most High ; so God with Man unites.
Needs must the Serpent now his capital bruise
Expect with mortal pain. Say where and when
Their fight, what stroke shall bruise the Victor's heel."

To whom thus Michael :—"Dream not of their fight
As of a duel, or the local wounds
Of head or heel. Not therefore joins the Son
Manhood to Godhead, with more strength to foil
Thy enemy ; nor so is overcome 390
Satan, whose fall from Heaven, a deadlier bruise,
Disabled not to give thee thy death's wound ;
Which he who comes thy Saviour shall recure,
Not by destroying Satan, but his works
In thee and in thy seed. Nor can this be,
But by fulfilling that which thou didst want,
Obedience to the law of God, imposed
On penalty of death, and suffering death,
The penalty to thy transgression due,
And due to theirs which out of thine will grow : 400

So only can high justice rest appaid.
The Law of God exact he shall fulfil
Both by obedience and by love, though love
Alone fulfil the Law ; thy punishment
He shall endure, by coming in the flesh
To a reproachful life and cursèd death,
Proclaiming life to all who shall believe
In his redemption, and that his obedience
Imputed becomes theirs by faith—his merits
To save them, not their own, though legal, works. 410
For this he shall live hated, be blasphemed,
Seized on by force, judged, and to death condemned
A shameful and accursed, nailed to the cross
By his own nation, slain for bringing life ;
But to the cross he nails thy enemies—
The Law that is against thee, and the sins
Of all mankind, with him there crucified,
Never to hurt them more who rightly trust
In this his satisfaction. So he dies,
But soon revives ; Death over him no power 420
Shall long usurp. Ere the third dawning light
Return, the stars of morn shall see him rise
Out of his grave, fresh as the dawning light,
Thy ransom paid, which Man from Death redeems—
His death for Man, as many as offered life
Neglect not, and the benefit embrace
By faith not void of works. This godlike act
Annuls thy doom, the death thou shouldst have died,
In sin for ever lost from life ; this act
Shall bruise the head of Satan, crush his strength, 430
Defeating Sin and Death, his two main arms,
And fix far deeper in his head their stings
Than temporal death shall bruise the Victor's heel,
Or theirs whom he redeems—a death like sleep,
A gentle wafting to immortal life.

Nor after resurrection shall he stay
Longer on Earth than certain times to appear
To his disciples—men who in his life
Still followed him ; to them shall leave in charge
To teach all nations what of him they learned 440
And his salvation, them who shall believe
Baptizing in the profluent stream—the sign
Of washing them from guilt of sin to life
Pure, and in mind prepared, if so befall,
For death like that which the Redeemer died.
All nations they shall teach ; for from that day
Not only to the sons of Abraham's loins
Salvation shall be preached, but to the sons
Of Abraham's faith wherever through the world ,
So in his seed all nations shall be blest. 450
Then to the Heaven of Heavens he shall ascend
With victory, triumphing through the air
Over his foes and thine ; there shall surprise
The Serpent, Prince of Air, and drag in chains
Through all his realm, and there confounded leave ;
Then enter into glory, and resume
His seat at God's right hand, exalted high
Above all names in Heaven ; and thence shall come,
When this World's dissolution shall be ripe,
With glory and power, to judge both quick and dead—
To judge the unfaithful dead, but to reward 461
His faithful, and receive them into bliss,
Whether in Heaven or Earth ; for then the Earth
Shall all be Paradise, far happier place
Than this of Eden, and far happier days."

So spake the Archangel Michael ; then paused,
As at the World's great period ; and our Sire,
Replete with joy and wonder, thus replied :—

" O Goodness infinite, Goodness immense,
That all this good of evil shall produce, 470

And evil turn to good—more wonderful
Than that which by creation first brought forth
Light out of darkness ! Full of doubt I stand,
Whether I should repent me now of sin
By me done and occasioned, or rejoice
Much more that much more good thereof shall spring—
To God more glory, more good-will to men
From God—and over wrath grace shall abound.
But say, if our Deliverer up to Heaven
Must reascend, what will betide the few, 480
His faithful, left among the unfaithful herd,
The enemies of truth. Who then shall guide
His people, who defend ? Will they not deal
Worse with his followers than with him they dealt ?”

“Be sure they will,” said the Angel ; “but from
Heaven

He to his own a Comforter will send,
The promise of the Father, who shall dwell,
His Spirit, within them, and the law of faith
Working through love upon their hearts shall write
To guide them in all truth, and also arm 490
With spiritual armour, able to resist
Satan's assaults, and quench his fiery darts—
What man can do against them not afraid,
Though to the death ; against such cruelties
With inward consolations recompensed,
And oft supported so as shall amaze
Their proudest persecutors. For the Spirit,
Poured first on his Apostles, whom he sends
To evangelize the nations, then on all
Baptized, shall them with wondrous gifts endue 500
To speak all tongues, and do all miracles,
As did their Lord before them. Thus they win
Great numbers of each nation to receive
With joy the tidings brought from Heaven : at length,

Their ministry performed, and race well run,
Their doctrine and their story written left,
They die ; but in their room, as they forewarn,
Wolves shall succeed for teachers, grievous wolves,
Who all the sacred mysteries of Heaven
To their own vile advantages shall turn 510
Of lucre and ambition, and the truth
With superstitions and traditions taint,
Left only in those written records pure,
Though not but by the Spirit understood.
Then shall they seek to avail themselves of names,
Places, and titles, and with these to join
Secular power, though feigning still to act
By spiritual ; to themselves appropriating ,
The Spirit of God, promised alike and given
To all believers ; and, from that pretence, 520
Spiritual laws by carnal power shall force
On every conscience—laws which none shall find
Left them enrolled, or what the Spirit within
Shall on the heart engrave. What will they then
But force the Spirit of Grace itself, and bind
His consort, Liberty ? what but unbuild
His living temples, built by faith to stand—
Their own faith, not another's ? for, on Earth,
Who against faith and conscience can be heard
Infallible ? Yet many will presume : 530
Whence heavy persecution shall arise
On all who in the worship persevere
Of Spirit and Truth ; the rest, far greater part,
Will deem in outward rites and specious forms
Religion satisfied ; Truth shall retire
Bestuck with slanderous darts, and works of Faith
Rarely be found. So shall the World go on,
To good malignant, to bad men benign,
Under her own weight groaning, till the day

Appear of respiration to the just 540
And vengeance to the wicked, at return
Of Him so lately promised to thy aid,
The Woman's Seed—obscurely then foretold,
Now amplier known thy Saviour and thy Lord ;
Last in the clouds from Heaven to be revealed
In glory of the Father, to dissolve
Satan with his perverted World ; then raise
From the conflagrant mass, purged and refined,
New Heavens, new Earth, Ages of endless date
Founded in righteousness and peace and love, 550
To bring forth fruits, joy and eternal bliss.”

He ended ; and thus Adam last replied :—
“ How soon hath thy prediction, Seer blest,
Measured this transient World, the race of Time,
Till Time stand fixed ! Beyond is all abyss—
Eternity, whose end no eye can reach.
Greatly instructed I shall hence depart,
Greatly in peace of thought, and have my fill
Of knowledge, what this vessel can contain ;
Beyond which was my folly to aspire. 560
Henceforth I learn that to obey is best,
And love with fear the only God, to walk
As in his presence, ever to observe
His providence, and on him sole depend,
Merciful over all his works, with good
Still overcoming evil, and by small
Accomplishing great things—by things deemed weak
Subverting worldly-strong, and worldly-wise
By simply meek ; that suffering for Truth's sake
Is fortitude to highest victory, 570
And to the faithful death the gate of life—
Taught this by his example whom I now
Acknowledge my Redeemer ever blest.”

To whom thus also the Angel last replied :—

"This having learned, thou hast attained the
 Of Wisdom ; hope no higher, though all the
 Thou knew'st by name, and all the ethereal powers
 All secrets of the Deep, all Nature's works,
 Or works of God in heaven, air, earth, or sea,
 And all the riches of this world enjoy'dst,
 And all the rule, one empire. Only add
 Deeds to thy knowledge answerable ; add faith
 Add virtue, patience, temperance ; add love,
 By name to come called Charity, the soul
 Of all the rest : then wilt thou not be loth
 To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess
 A Paradise within thee, happier far.
 Let us descend now, therefore, from this top
 Of speculation ; for the hour precise
 Exacts our parting hence ; and, see ! the guards,
 By me encamped on yonder hill, expect
 Their motion, at whose front a flaming sword,
 In signal of remove, waves fiercely round.
 We may no longer stay. Go, waken Eve ;
 Her also I with gentle dreams have calmed,
 Portending good, and all her spirits composed
 To meek submission : thou, at season fit,
 Let her with thee partake what thou hast heard
 Chiefly what may concern her faith to know,
 The great deliverance by her seed to come
 (For by the Woman's Seed) on all mankind—
 That ye may live, which will be many days,
 Both in one faith unanimous ; though sad
 With cause for evils past, yet much more cheere
 With meditation on the happy end."

He ended, and they both descend the hill.
 Descended, Adam to the bower where Eve
 Lay sleeping ran before, but found her waked
 And thus with words not sad she him received

“ Whence thou return’st and whither went’st I know ;
For God is also in sleep, and dreams advise, 611
Which he hath sent propitious, some great good
Presaging, since, with sorrow and heart’s distress
Wearied, I fell asleep. But now lead on ;
In me is no delay ; with thee to go
Is to stay here ; without thee here to stay
Is to go hence unwilling ; thou to me
Art all things under Heaven, all places thou,
Who for my wilful crime art banished hence.
This further consolation yet secure 620
I carry hence : though all by me is lost,
Such favour I unworthy am voutsafed,
By me the Promised Seed shall all restore.”

So spake our mother Eve ; and Adam heard
Well pleased, but answered not ; for now too nigh
The Archangel stood, and from the other hill
To their fixed station, all in bright array,
The Cherubim descended, on the ground
Gliding metecorous, as evening mist
Risen from a river o’er the marish glides, 630
And gathers ground fast at the labourer’s heel
Homeward returning. High in front advanced,
The brandished sword of God before them blazed,
Fierce as a comet ; which with torrid heat,
And vapour as the Libyan air adust,
Began to parch that temperate clime ; whereat
In either hand the hastening Angel caught
Our lingering parents, and to the eastern gate
Led them direct, and down the cliff as fast
To the subjected plain—then disappeared. 640
They, looking back, all the eastern side beheld
Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,
Waved over by that flaming brand ; the gate
With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms.

Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon ;
The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide.
They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way.

THE END

PARADISE REGAINED

INTRODUCTION

TO

PARADISE REGAINED

Paradise Regained may have been complete in manuscript before the publication of *Paradise Lost*. This we infer from an interesting passage in the Autobiography of the Quaker, Thomas Ellwood, in which he gives an account of the origin of *Paradise Regained*, and claims the credit of having suggested the subject to Milton. We have already seen (Introduction to *Paradise Lost*, pp. 52-53) how young Ellwood, visiting Milton, in 1665, at the cottage in Chalfont-St.-Giles, Buckinghamshire, where he was then residing to avoid the Great Plague in London, had a manuscript given him by the poet, with a request to read it at his leisure, and return it with his judgment thereon. On taking this manuscript home with him, Ellwood tells us, he found it to be *Paradise Lost*. He then proceeds as follows:—

“After I had, with the best attention, read it through, I made him
“another visit, and returned him his book, with due acknowledgment
“of the favour he had done me in communicating it to me. He
“asked how I liked it, and what I thought of it; which I modestly,
“but freely, told him: and, after some further discourse about it, I
“pleasantly said to him, ‘Thou hast said much here of *Paradise Lost*;
“but what hast thou to say of *Paradise Found*?’ He made me no
“answer, but sate some time in a muse, then brake off that discourse
“and fell upon another subject. After the Sickness was over, and
“the city well cleansed and become safely habitable again, he returned
“thither. And when, afterwards, I went to wait on him there (which
“I seldom failed of doing, whenever my occasions drew me to
“London), he showed me his second poem, called *Paradise Regained*,

"and in a pleasant tone said to me, 'This is owing to you; for you put it into my head by the question you put to me at Chalfont, which before I had not thought of.'"¹ The inference from this passage may perhaps be that the poem was at least begun in the cottage at Chalfont-St.-Giles (say in the winter of 1665-6), and that, if not finished there, it was finished in Milton's house in Artillery Walk, shortly after his return to town in 1666. Accordingly, when *Paradise Lost* was published in the autumn of 1667, its sequel, though kept back, may have been ready.

If this is a right calculation, the poem remained in manuscript for about four years. It was not published till 1671, when *Paradise Lost* had been in circulation for four years, and when the first edition of that poem must have been nearly, if not quite, exhausted,—for that edition was restricted to 1500 copies at the utmost, and Milton's receipt for the second five pounds, due, by agreement, on the sale of 1300 of these copies, bears date April 26, 1669. But, for some reason or other, Simmons, the publisher of *Paradise Lost*, was delaying a second edition of that poem,—which did not appear till 1674. It may have been owing to dissatisfaction on Milton's part with this delay that he did not put *Paradise Regained* into Simmons's hands, but had it printed in an independent manner. Conjoining with it *Samson Agonistes*, which he had also for some time had by him, or had just composed, he issued the two poems in a small octavo volume of 220 pages, with this general title-page—"Paradise Regain'd. A Poem. In IV. Books. To which is added Samson Agonistes. The Author John Milton. London, Printed by J. M. for John Starkey at the Mitre in Fleetstreet, near Temple Bar. MDC.LXXI." There is no separate title-page to *Paradise Regained*; which commences on the next leaf after this general title, and extends to p. 112 of the volume. Then there is a separate title-leaf to *Samson Agonistes*; which poem, occupying the rest of the volume, is separately paged. On the last leaf of the whole volume are two sets of *Errata*, entitled "Errata in the former Poem" and "Errata in the latter Poem."

Not Samuel Simmons of the Golden Lion in Aldersgate Street, the publisher of *Paradise Lost*, it will be seen, but John Starkey, of the Mitre in Fleet Street, was the publisher of the new volume. This was not the first of Starkey's dealings with Milton; for the title-page

¹ The History of the Life of Thomas Ellwood, Second Edition (1714), pp. 246, 247.

of Milton's *Accidence Commend't Grammar*, published in 1669, purports that, though that little book had been "printed for S. S.," the copies were on sale at Starkey's shop. In the present case, however, while Starkey was the actual publisher, the printer, it seems, was a "J. M." The inference drawn from this particular by so good an authority in such matters as the late Mr. Leigh Sotheby is worth attention. After quoting the title of the volume, as above, he adds: "It is interesting " here to notice that the initials of Milton occur in the imprint as the "printer of the volume. Such was frequently the case when a work " was printed solely at the expense of the author."¹ The inference, however, is by no means necessary. The initials "J. M." are not uncommon; there was at least one known London printer of the day with those initials; and, as Milton's *History of Britain*, published in 1670, only a few months before his present volume, bears on its title-page the words "Printed by J. M. for James Allestry," the most reasonable supposition is that this London printer, after having been employed for the one publication by Allestry, was employed for the other by Starkey. In confirmation of this conclusion that the two new poems were not printed at Milton's expense, but in the ordinary trade way by the publisher, we may here note the entry of the volume in the books of the Stationers' Company:

Septemb. 10, 1670: Mr. John Starkey entered for his copie, under the hands of Mr. Tho. Tomkyns and Mr. Warden Roper, a copie or Booke Intituled Paradise regain'd, A Poem in 4 Bookes. The Author John Milton. To which is added Samson Agonistes, a drammatic [sic] Poem, by the same Author.

The volume itself furnishes an additional item of information. On the page opposite the general title-page at the beginning is this brief imprint, "Licensed, July 2, 1670,"—from which it appears that the necessary licence had been obtained by Milton from the censor Tomkyns. Apparently Tomkyns gave this licence more easily than he had given that for *Paradise Lost*.

The volume containing the first editions of *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes* is handsome enough in appearance, - the paper thicker than that of the first edition of *Paradise Lost*, and the type more distinct and more widely spaced. But the printing, especially the pointing, is not nearly so accurate. Within the first few pages one finds commas where there should be full stops or colons, and *vice*

¹ Ramblings in the Elucidation of the Autograph of Milton, 1861, p. 83.

versâ, and becomes aware that the person or persons who assisted Milton in seeing the volume through the press cannot have been so careful as those who performed the like duty for the former poem,—where, though the pointing is not our modern pointing, it rarely conflicts with the sense.

Whatever was the number of copies printed, it sufficed the demand during the rest of Milton's life, and for six years beyond. When he died in 1674, there was a second edition of the *Paradise Lost*, to be followed by a third in 1678; but it was not till 1680 that there was a second edition of the *Paradise Regained* and *Samson*. It was brought out by the same publisher, Starkey, and is of inferior appearance and getting-up to the first,—the size still small octavo, but the type closer, so as to reduce the number of pages. The title-pages remain the same; but the two poems are now paged continuously, and not separately. There seems to have been no particular care in revising for the press, for errors noted in the list of errata in the former edition remain uncorrected in the text of this. Appended to the volume is an advertisement, in four pages, of books printed for Starkey. They are chiefly medical and historical,—but among them is an edition of Sir William Davenant's collected works.

Third editions, both of the *Paradise Regained* and of the *Samson*, appeared in folio in 1688, sold, either together or separately, by a new publisher,—Randal Taylor; and these are commonly found bound up with the fourth or folio edition of *Paradise Lost*, published by another bookseller in the same year. From this time forward, in fact, the connexion between *Paradise Regained* and *Samson*, originally accidental, is not kept up, save for mere convenience in publication. The tendency was to editions of all Milton's poetical works collectively,—in which editions it was natural to put *Paradise Lost* first, then *Paradise Regained*, then *Samson Agonistes*, and after these the *Minor Poems*. The greater demand for *Paradise Lost*, however, making it convenient to divide the Poetical Works in publication, two methods of doing so presented themselves. On the one hand, there was an obvious propriety, if the Poems were to be divided at all, in detaching *Paradise Regained* from *Samson* and the rest, and attaching it to *Paradise Lost*; and, accordingly, there are instances of such conjoint editions of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, apart from the other poems, in 1692, 1775, and 1776. But a more convenient

plan, mechanically, inasmuch as it divided the Poems collectively into two portions of nearly equal bulk, was to let *Paradise Lost* stand by itself in one or more volumes, and throw *Paradise Regained*, *Samson*, and the *Minor Poems* together into a separate issue in one or more volumes,—the two sets combinable or not into a collective edition. This plan, first adopted by Tonson in 1695, has prevailed since, and in the eighteenth century I count nine separate editions of *Paradise Regained*, *Samson*, and the *Minor Poems* (the most notable being Tonson's of 1713, Fenton's of 1725, and Tonson's of 1747), against thirty-five or thirty-six separate editions of *Paradise Lost*,—not reckoning the expressly collective editions appearing meanwhile of all the Poetical Works. Exceptional editions, I believe, were one of *Paradise Regained* by itself at Edinburgh in 1785, another at Alnwick in 1793, and another at London, in quarto, with variorum notes by Dunster, in 1795. I have found no case after 1688 of the re-association of the *Paradise Regained* and the *Samson* in an edition apart from the other poems.

↓ There is not the least reason for doubting Ellwood's statement as to the way in which the subject of *Paradise Regained* was suggested to Milton. There is no such evidence as in the case of *Paradise Lost* of long meditation of the subject previous to the actual composition of the poem. Among Milton's jottings, in 1640-1, of subjects for dramas, or other poems (see Introduction to *Paradise Lost*, pp. 43-47), there are indeed several from the New Testament History. There is a somewhat detailed scheme of a drama, to be called *Baptistes*, on the subject of the death of John the Baptist at the hands of Herod. There are also seven notes of subjects from the Life of Christ,—the first, entitled *Christus Patiens*, accompanied by a few words which show that, under that title, Milton had an idea of a drama on the scene of the Agony in the Garden; the others entered simply as follows: "*Christ Born*," "*Herod Massacring, or Rachel Weeping* (Matt. ii.)," "*Christ Bound*," "*Christ Crucified*," "*Christ Risen*," and "*Lazarus* (John xi.)" But not one of those eight subjects, thought of in Milton's early manhood, it will be seen, corresponds with the precise subject of *Paradise Regained*, executed when he was verging on sixty. The subject of that poem is expressly and exclusively the Temptation of Christ by the Devil in the Wilderness, after his baptism by John, as related in Matt. iv. 1-11, ~~Mark i. 12, 13,~~ and Luke iv.

1-13. Commentators on the Poem, indeed, have remarked it as somewhat strange that Milton should have given so general a title as "Paradise Regained" to a poem representing only this particular passage of the Gospel History. For the subject of the Poem is thus announced in the opening lines—

" I, who erewhile the happy Garden sung
By one man's disobedience lost, now sing
Recovered Paradise to all mankind,
By one man's firm obedience fully tried
Through all temptation, and the Tempter foiled
In all his wiles, defeated and repulsed,
And Eden raised in the waste Wilderness."

On which passage, and on the Poem generally, a commentator (Thyer), representing a general feeling, makes this remark: "It may seem a little odd that Milton should impute the recovery of Paradise to this short scene of our Saviour's life upon earth, and not rather extend it to His Agony, Crucifixion, etc. But the reason, no doubt, was that Paradise *regained* by our Saviour's resisting the temptation of Satan might be a better contrast to Paradise *lost* by our first parents too easily yielding to the same seducing Spirit." This remark is perfectly just; but it receives elucidation and point from Ellwood's story of the way in which the poem came into existence.

The young Quaker, by his casual observation, in the cottage at Chalfont-St.-Giles, "Thou hast said much here of *Paradise Lost*; but what hast thou to say of *Paradise Found*?" had stirred something in Milton's mind. He made no answer, but "sate some time in a muse," and then talked of something else. But an idea had flashed upon him,—the idea of a sequel to *Paradise Lost*, to be called *Paradise Regained*. Had he not, in *Paradise Lost* itself, assumed, and pointed throughout to, the possibility of such a sequel? Thus, even in the opening lines of the poem, defining its scope:—

" Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
Brought death into the World, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing, Heavenly Muse."

Here he had actually limited beforehand the horizon of the poem on

which he was then engaged. He had limited it by the perception of a new event in the distance, retrieving the catastrophe he was about to sing.¹ Might not that new event also be made the theme of a poem? And, if so, would it not be fit, as his young Quaker friend had hinted, that he, who had sung the loss of Eden, should treat also this theme of its recovery?

That idea once in Milton's mind, there is no difficulty in seeing how the story of *Paradise Regained*, as conceived by him, should have concentrated itself in the single passage of the Gospel History known as the Temptation of Christ in the Wilderness, rather than have diffused itself through the entire range of Christ's ministry and passion. By no such diffusion of the story over the range of Christ's recorded ministry and passion could there, in fact, have been a representation of an actual and completely achieved regaining of Paradise, in the sense of a recovery of all that had been lost, all that had been physically and morally wrecked, in the catastrophe of the previous poem. Mankind and the whole world still lay, in Milton's belief, while he himself lived, and would continue to lie, as he believed, for generations yet to follow, immersed in the full consequences of that catastrophe, - sin everywhere, misery everywhere, disease everywhere, death everywhere: the original Paradise on Earth obliterated as ever, and no recovered Paradise anywhere discernible. What had been accomplished by the events in Judaea, as Milton believed, was but the *potential* recovery of the Lost Paradise of the First Adam - the certainty of perfect redemption for all the chosen by the merits of the Second Adam, and of the final restitution of all things in the glory of the new Heavens and Earth which He would establish when time should be full. Now, though the representation of this recovery might have taken the form of a narrative of the whole series of the events of Christ's life and ministry on Earth, there was no reason why there should not be concentration of the story on some one portion of that life and ministry, selected as specially significant. Of this liberty Milton availed himself. In *his* hands, at least, the second poem must correspond with the first, - must presuppose that first, and be the artistic antithesis to it. But what had been the theme of

¹ It occurs to me as not impossible that Milton, if he had *Paradise Regained* by him in manuscript before *Paradise Lost* was printed, may have touched into the text of *Paradise Lost* here and there such occult pre-advertisements of its successor as that in the opening lines.

the first poem? The Temptation of Adam and its results. Seeking for the most exact antithesis to this in the life of that "one greater Man" by whom these results were to be retrieved, of what could the poet think so readily as of the Temptation to which *He* was subjected with an issue so different? Why not concentrate, poetically or representatively, the whole of Christ's achievement in undoing the effects of the Fall and restoring Paradise on the issue of that Second Temptation which stood out in such contrast with the First? If a single portion of Christ's history were to be taken, it behoved to be this portion, where, more directly than in any other, Christ is brought into contact with the Evil Being who had figured as the hero of the former poem, and had there borne away the victory. The same Satan, the story of whose fortunes from his rebellion in the Empyrean Heaven down to his temptation of Adam, and conquest thereby of Earth and the Universe of Man, forms the thread of events in the former poem, here reappears, in changed guise, after some thousands of years of his diabolic life amid those mundane elements the possession of which he had won for himself and his crew of fellow-demons. He reappears; and, remembering all that we had read of him before, we are called upon to behold him again in action, —to behold him meeting Jesus, the Second Adam, in a deliberate encounter more protracted than that with the first, and feeling himself foiled, and knowing in consequence that the prophesied era of the world's virtual redemption has arrived, and the cessation of his own rule before a stronger force. In order that Satan, who had figured so largely in the first poem, might have his due place in the second, it was necessary to select the Temptation of Christ in the Wilderness as the incident to be dwelt on and developed in the second. Any theological objection that there might be to the seeming imputation thereby of the recovery of Paradise to one short scene in Christ's life, and that but preliminary to his main recorded ministry, might be obviated by representing the scene so that it should be typical of the ministry as a whole. It might be impressed on readers that here, at the very beginning of Christ's ministry, Satan, encountering Him, knew that he had met his match, and that all that followed in the whole ministry, to its close, was virtually certain from the date of this initial act of divine superiority.

Only by firmly remembering that it was as a sequel to *Paradise Lost* that *Paradise Regained* grew into shape in Milton's mind will

the second poem be rightly understood. The commentators, indeed, as they have sought the "origin of *Paradise Lost*," or hints for its origin, in all sorts of previous poems, Italian, Latin, and Dutch, on the same subject (see our Introduction to the Poem), have, though less laboriously, searched for previous poems from which Milton may have taken hints for his *Paradise Regained*. Todd, in his preliminary observations entitled "Origin of *Paradise Regained*," refers to the following pieces as possibly in Milton's recollection while he was writing the Poem:—Bale's *Brefe Comedy or Enterlude concernynge the Temptacyon of our Lorde and Saver Jesus Christ by Sathan in the Desart* (1538); Giles Fletcher's *Christ's Victorie and Triumph* (1611), a poem in four parts, the second of which, entitled "Christ's Triumph on Earth," describes the Temptation; also *La Humanità del Figliuolo di Dio*, a poem in ten books, by Theofilo Folengo of Mantua (1533), *La Vita et Passione di Christo*, a poem by Antonio Cornozano (1518), and one or two other Italian poems cited at random for their titles and not from knowledge. More recently, the Dutch poet Vondel, respecting Milton's possible indebtedness to whom in *Paradise Lost* there has been so much argument, has been brought forward as having presumably also aided Milton more or less by hints for his *Paradise Regained*. It is indeed the express speculation of Mr. George Edmundson, the latest champion of Vondel's claims in the Miltonic connexion, that there may be detected in *Paradise Regained* the spillings-over, if we may so express it, of such borrowed matter from Vondel's *Lucifer*, his *Joannes Boeckersant*, etc., as Milton had not been able, with all his dexterity, to use up wholly in his *Paradise Lost*. Instances are given by Mr. Edmundson in the shape of what he regards as obvious parallelisms in *Paradise Regained*, as well as in *Paradise Lost*, with passages in the Dutchman's poems. No need, however, after all that has been said in our Introduction to the larger Epic by way of examination and discussion of Mr. Edmundson's peculiar Vondelian theory (*ante*, pp. 145-164), to readvert to that theory in Mr. Edmundson's attempted extension of it to the smaller Epic in particular. If what has been said at so much length already in review of Mr. Edmundson's theory of Milton's indebtedness to Vondel in *Paradise Lost*, and in review also of all the prior forms, back through Todd to Lauder and Voltaire, of the same essential hypothesis of Milton's indebtedness in that poem to this predecessor and that predecessor, and to scores of forgotten nobodies together,

and to everybody in fact but his own self,—if what has been so said already has had any sufficient effect, the reader ought by this time, I fancy, to be heartily sick of the whole of that silly subject. Of Todd's references, as above cited, the only one, I may add, that seems to me worth anything whatever is that to Giles Fletcher's religious poem. Giles Fletcher, who died in 1623, and his brother Phineas Fletcher, who outlived him more than twenty-five years, were among the truest poets in the interval between Spenser and Milton, and the highest in that Spenserian faculty which Milton possessed and admired. He must have known the works of both brothers well, and not least the really fine poem of Giles Fletcher to which Todd refers. But recollection of it can have had no effect on the *scheme* of his own *Paradise Regained*. That was determined simply by the poet's own meditations on those passages of the Evangelists which narrate the Temptation in the Wilderness,—especially the eleven verses in Matt. iv. and the thirteen in Luke iv.,—with a view to construct therefrom an imagination of the whole scene which, while it should be true to the scriptural text, should fit as a sequel to *Paradise Lost*. The result was the poem as we now have it,—a poem in which the brief scriptural narrative of the Temptation is expanded into four books, and yet the additions and filling-in are consistent with the texts which have suggested them.

So distinctly is *Paradise Regained* a sequel to *Paradise Lost* that acquaintance with *Paradise Lost* is all but presupposed in the reader ere he begins the shorter poem. Such acquaintance, indeed, is not absolutely necessary; but it conduces to a more exact understanding of the meaning of the total poem, and of not a few individual passages in it. Indeed, even that diagram of Universal Space or Physical Infinitude which was before the poet's mind, as we have seen, throughout *Paradise Lost* (see Introduction to that Poem), is still present to his mind, though more dimly, in *Paradise Regained*.

The result of Satan's triumph in *Paradise Lost*, it is to be remembered, was that he and his crew of Fallen Angels had succeeded in adding the "orbicular World" of Man, *i.e.* the whole Starry Universe with the Earth at its centre, to that infernal Empire of Hell to which they had been driven down on their expulsion from Heaven or the Empyrean. At the close of the real action of the great epic this is what we find Satan and Sin congratulating themselves upon (Book X. 350-409),—that Man's World has now been wrested from the Empire

of Heaven above, and annexed to that of Hell beneath. An inter-communication has been established between Hell and Man's World, and it is hinted that thenceforward the Fallen Angels will not dwell so much in their main dark dominion of Hell as in the more light-some World overhead, to which access is now easy. Distributing themselves through this World, they will rule its spheres and its elements; but more especially will they congregate in the Air round the central Earth, so as to intermingle with human affairs continually, and exercise their diabolic functions on the successive generations of men. They,—originally Angels in the Empyrean Heaven, then doomed spirits in Hell,—will now be the "Powers of the Air" round about the Earth, and the Gods of Man's World. So they anticipate; and, over and over again throughout the poem, we are reminded that their anticipation has been fulfilled. What is the theory throughout *Paradise Lost* but that the gods of all the heathen mythologies, worshipped by all the nations, are the Fallen Angels who, in their new condition as Demons of Man's World and Powers of the Air, have so blinded and drugged the perceptions and imaginations of men as to be accepted for divinities?

In *Paradise Regained* all this is assumed. It is assumed that for some thousands of years these "Powers of the Air," *alias* Devils, *alias* Gods of the Polytheistic Mythologies, have been in possession of Man's World, distributed some here, some there, according to their characters and faculties of mischief, but occasionally meeting in council somewhere in the element of Air or Mist. Satan is still their chief,—the greatest in power and in ability, the leader in their councils, their governor, and the director of their common enterprises. He is no longer quite the same sublime spirit as in the *Paradise Lost*, in whom were to be discerned the majestic lineaments of the Archangel just ruined. The thousands of years he has spent since then in his self-selected function as the Devil of our Earth,—no longer flying from star to star and through the grander regions of Universal Space, but winging about constantly close to our Earth, and meddling incessantly with all that is worst in merely terrestrial affairs,—have told upon his nature, and even upon his mien and bearing. He is a meaner, shrewder spirit, both morally and physically less impressive. But he has not yet degenerated into the mere scoffing Mephistopheles of Goethe's great poem. He retains something of his former magnanimity, or at least of his power of understanding and appealing to

the higher motives of thought and action. Whatever of really great invention or wisdom remains among the diabolic host in their diffusion through Man's World and its elements is still chiefly lodged in *him*. He it is, accordingly, who, in his vigilance as to what goes on on Earth, is the first to become aware of the advent of one who may possibly be that prophesied "greater Man" who is to retrieve the consequences of Adam's fall, end the diabolic influence in Man's World, and reconnect that World with Heaven. He it is who, as soon as he has made this discovery, summons the diabolic crew to consultation ; and the farther trial of Christ's virtue likewise devolves on him.

The greater portion of the first book of the Poem is preliminary to the real action. It describes the baptism of Christ, when about thirty years of age, and as yet obscure and unknown, by John at Bethabara on the Jordan, the recognition of him by John, the proclamation from Heaven of his Messiahship, the presence of Satan among those who hear this proclamation, and Satan's alarm thereupon. A few days are then supposed to elapse, during which Christ remains in his lodging in Bethabara, the object now of much public regard, and with his first disciples gathering round him ; after which he is led by the Spirit into the wilderness, there to revolve his past life, and meditate on the ministry he is about to begin. It is after he has been already forty days in the Desert, and has begun to feel hunger, that the special action of the Poem opens (I. 303). It extends over three days. On the first day (the fortieth, it is to be supposed, of Christ's stay in the Wilderness) we have Satan's presentation of himself to Christ in the guise of an old peasant, their first discourse, and the commencement of the Temptation in the manner in which it is related both in Matthew and in Luke,—to wit, by the suggestion to Christ that he should prove his divinity by turning the stones around him into bread. This part of the relation occupies the remainder of Book I., which ends with a description of the coming on of night in the Desert. In Book II. the relation is resumed,—about half the Book being occupied with an episodic account of the perplexity of Mary and the disciples by reason of Christ's mysterious absence, and an account also of a second council of the Evil Spirits to advise with Satan on his farther proceedings ; but the remainder of the Book bringing us back to the Desert, where Satan, early in the second day, renews the temptation. This second day's temptation is the most

protracted and laborious, and the account of it extends from Book II. through the whole of Book III. and over two-thirds of Book IV. It is here that Milton has allowed his imagination the largest liberty in expanding the brief hints of the scriptural texts. Both in Matthew and in Luke the acts of the Temptation are represented as three. There is the Temptation of the Bread, or the appeal to Christ's hunger, which is put first by both Evangelists; there is the Temptation of the Vision of the Kingdoms of the Earth from a mountain-top, or the appeal to Christ's ambition,—which Luke puts second in order, but Matthew last; and there is the Temptation on the pinnacle of the Temple, or, as it may be called, the appeal to vanity,—which Matthew puts second, but Luke last. Milton, assigning a separate day to each act of the Temptation, follows Luke's order rather than Matthew's in the last two acts, and devotes the second day to the appeal to Christ's ambition. But he adds a variety of circumstances. He begins the day, for example, with a repetition of the hunger-temptation of the previous day, and then passes on to subtle appeals to the higher appetites of wealth and power, so as to prepare the way for the vision of the Kingdoms of the Earth from the mountain-top. Milton's management of this vision (which begins at line 251 of Book III. and extends to line 393 of Book IV.) has hardly met with sufficient admiration. He contrives to make it not only a splendid, but also a most accurate, general view of the political condition of the earth at the time referred to, when the Parthians in the East and the Romans in the West were the great rival powers that had swamped all others; and by thus supposing Satan to have based his temptation on the actual state of the world, and a calculation of what might be done by the genius of a bold adventurer striking in at that particular juncture between the Romans and the Parthians, he imparts to it a character of high Machiavellian ability. But the Temptation passes into still a new vein at the close; where, the direct appeal to political ambition having failed, Satan, with Athens in view instead of Rome, tries to work on the passion for purely intellectual distinction. This too failing, the second day's temptation is at an end, and there is the return from the mountain-top to the wilderness, where Christ is left alone during a night of storm and ghastliness. There remains then only the final act of the Temptation, reserved for the third day,—the temptation on the pinnacle of the Temple. Although Milton has also put his own interpretation on this portion of the Temptation, working

up to the actual transportation of Christ to the pinnacle, and the challenge of his power there, by previous questionings of Satan whether, after all, he is the "Son of God" in any very extraordinary sense, yet a comparatively brief space suffices both for the discourse leading up to the incident and for the incident itself. The third day's temptation, indeed, encroaching only a little on that day, and not protracted over the whole of it, occupies only about the last third of Book IV. One sees, at the close of the poem, why Milton preferred Luke's arrangement of the three acts of the Temptation to Matthew's. The reservation of the incident on the pinnacle of the Temple to the last enables the poet to close with that fine visual effect of Christ standing alone on the pinnacle, after Satan's inglorious fall, till the fiery globe of ministering Angels surround him, and bear him in safety to Earth on their wings as on a floating couch. Down they bear him to a flowery valley, and to the celestial food spread out for him there; he refreshes himself therewith while the Angels above sing a hymn of his victory and its consequences; then, rising, he finds his way unobserved to his mother's house.

Speaking of *Paradise Regained*, Milton's nephew, Phillips, says (Life of Milton, 1694): "It is generally censured to be much inferior to the other (*i.e.* to *Paradise Lost*), though he (Milton) could not hear with patience any such thing when related to him." Tradition, as usual, has exaggerated this statement, until now the current assertion is that Milton preferred *Paradise Regained* to *Paradise Lost*. We may safely say that he knew better than to do any such thing. But, probably, in that "general censure" of the inferiority of the smaller poem, which had begun, according to Phillips, even during the three years that were spared Milton to note its reception, he discovered critical misconceptions which have transmitted themselves to our time. "Is *Paradise Regained* complete or not?" is a question on which a good deal has been written by Peck, Warburton, Newton, and others. The sole reason for thinking that it is incomplete, and that possibly the four books of the Poem as it now stands were originally intended only as part of a much larger poem, is founded on the smallness of that portion of Christ's life which is embraced in the poem, and on the stopping short of that consummation which would have completed the antithesis to *Paradise Lost*, - *i.e.* the expulsion of Satan and his crew out of the human World altogether back

to Hell. This objection has already been discussed, and found invalid. By no protraction of the poem over the rest of Christ's life, we may repeat, could Milton have brought the story to the consummation thought desirable. The *virtual* deliverance of the World from the power of Satan and his crew may be represented as achieved in Christ's life on earth, and Milton represents it as achieved in Christ's first encounter with Satan at the outset of his ministry; but the *actual* or *physical* expulsion of the Evil Spirits out of their usurped world into their own nether realm was left a matter of prophecy or promise, and was certainly not regarded by Milton as having been accomplished even at the time when he wrote. Such completion of the poem, therefore, as could be given to it by working it on to this historical consummation, was impossible. "Well, then," some critics continue, raising a second question, "can the poem properly be called an epic?" They have in view the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and the *Æneid*, as the types of epics; and they think *Paradise Regained* too short and too simple for such a name. But Milton had anticipated the objection as early as 1641, when, in his *Reason of Church-Government*, speaking of his literary schemes, he had distinguished two kinds of epics, of which he might have the option, if he should ultimately determine on the epic form of composition as the best for his genius. "That epick form," he had said, "whereof the two poems of "Homer, and those other two of Virgil and Tasso, are a *diffuse*, and "the Book of Job a *brief*, model." May we not say that, whereas in *Paradise Lost* he had adopted the larger or more diffuse of the two models, so in *Paradise Regained* he had in view the briefer model? Thus would put the matter on its right basis. *Paradise Regained* is not so great a poem as *Paradise Lost*, because not admitting of being so great; but it is as good in its different kind, artistically perfect in its clearness and coherence, and altogether one of the most *edifying* and *full-bodied* poems in any literature. The difference in kind between the two poems is signalled in certain differences in the language and versification. *Paradise Regained* seems written more rapidly than *Paradise Lost*, and, though with passages of superlative beauty, with less avoidance of plain historical phrases, and less care for sustained song.

PARADISE REGAINED:

A POEM IN FOUR BOOKS

THE AUTHOR

JOHN MILTON

PARADISE REGAINED

THE FIRST BOOK

I, WHO erewhile the happy Garden sung
By one man's disobedience lost, now sing
Recovered Paradise to all mankind,
By one man's firm obedience fully tried
Through all temptation, and the Tempter foiled
In all his wiles, defeated and repulsed,
And Eden raised in the waste Wilderness.

Thou Spirit, who led'st this glorious Eremite
Into the desert, his victorious field
Against the spiritual foe, and brought'st him thence 10
By proof the undoubted Son of God, inspire,
As thou art wont, my prompted song, else mute,
And bear through highth or depth of Nature's bounds,
With prosperous wing full summed, to tell of deeds
Above heroic, though in secret done,
And unrecorded left through many an age :
Worthy to have not remained so long unsung.

Now had the great Proclaimer, with a voice
More awful than the sound of trumpet, cried
Repentance, and Heaven's kingdom nigh at hand 20
To all baptized. To his great baptism flocked
With awe the regions round, and with them came
From Nazareth the son of Joseph deemed
To the flood Jordan—came as then obscure,

Unmarked, unknown. But him the Baptist soon
Descried, divinely warned, and witness bore
As to his worthier, and would have resigned
To him his heavenly office. Nor was long
His witness unconfirmed : on him baptized
Heaven opened, and in likeness of a dove 30
The Spirit descended, while the Father's voice
From Heaven pronounced him his beloved Son.
That heard the Adversary, who, roving still
About the world, at that assembly famed
Would not be last, and, with the voice divine
Nigh thunder-struck, the exalted man to whom
Such high attest was given a while surveyed
With wonder ; then, with envy fraught and rage,
Flies to his place, nor rests, but in mid air
To council summons all his mighty peers, 40
Within thick clouds and dark tenfold involved
A gloomy consistory ; and them amidst,
With looks aghast and sad, he thus bespake :—

“ O ancient Powers of Air and this wide World
(For much more willingly I mention Air,
This our old conquest, than remember Hell,
Our hated habitation), well ye know
How many ages, as the years of men,
This Universe we have possessed, and ruled
In manner at our will the affairs of Earth, 50
Since Adam and his facile consort Eve
Lost Paradise, deceived by me, though since
With dread attending when that fatal wound
Shall be inflicted by the seed of Eve
Upon my head. Long the decrees of Heaven
Delay, for longest time to Him is short ;
And now, too soon for us, the circling hours
This dreaded time have compassed, wherein we
Must bide the stroke of that long-threatened wound

(At least, if so we can, and by the head
Broken be not intended all our power
To be infringed, our freedom and our being
In this fair empire won of Earth and Air)—
For this ill news I bring : The Woman's Seed,
Destined to this, is late of woman born.
His birth to our just fear gave no small cause ;
But his growth now to youth's full flower, displaying
All virtue, grace and wisdom to achieve
Things highest, greatest, multiplies my fear
Before him a great Prophet, to proclaim
His coming, is sent harbinger, who all
Invites, and in the consecrated stream
Pretends to wash off sin, and fit them so
Purified to receive him pure, or rather
To do him honour as their King. All come,
And he himself among them was baptized—
Not thence to be more pure, but to receive
The testimony of Heaven, that who he is
Thenceforth the nations may not doubt. I saw
The Prophet do him reverence ; on him, rising
Out of the water, Heaven above the clouds
Unfold her crystal doors ; thence on his head
A perfect dove descend (whate'er it meant) ;
And out of Heaven the sovran voice I heard,
'This is my Son beloved,—in him am pleased.'
His mother, then, is mortal, but his Sire
He who obtains the monarchy of Heaven ;
And what will He not do to advance his Son ?
His first-begot we know, and sore have felt,
When his fierce thunder drove us to the Deep ;
Who this is we must learn, for Man he seems
In all his lineaments, though in his face
The glimpses of his Father's glory shine.
Ye see our danger on the utmost edge

Of hazard, which admits no long debate,
But must with something sudden be opposed
(Not force, but well-couched fraud, well-woven snares),
Ere in the head of nations he appear,
Their king, their leader, and supreme on Earth.
I, when no other durst, sole undertook 100
The dismal expedition to find out
And ruin Adam, and the exploit performed
Successfully : a calmer voyage now
Will waft me ; and the way found prosperous once
Induces best to hope of like success."

He ended, and his words impression left
Of much amazement to the infernal crew,
Distracted and surprised with deep dismay
At these sad tidings. But no time was then
For long indulgence to their fears or grief : 110
Unanimous they all commit the care
And management of this main enterprise
To him, their great Dictator, whose attempt
At first against mankind so well had thrived
In Adam's overthrow, and led their march
From Hell's deep-vaulted den to dwell in light,
Regents, and potentates, and kings, yea gods,
Of many a pleasant realm and province wide.
So to the coast of Jordan he directs
His easy steps, girded with snaky wiles, 120
Where he might likeliest find this new-declared,
This man of men, attested Son of God,
Temptation and all guile on him to try—
So to subvert whom he suspected raised
To end *his* reign on Earth so long enjoyed :
But, contrary, unweeting he fulfilled
The purposed counsel, pre-ordained and fixed,
Of the Most High, who, in full frequency bright
Of Angels, thus to Gabriel smiling spake :—

“Gabriel, this day, by proof, thou shalt behold, 130
Thou and all Angels conversant on Earth
With Man or men’s affairs, how I begin
To verify that solemn message late,
On which I sent thee to the Virgin pure
In Galilee, that she should bear a son,
Great in renown, and called the Son of God.
Then told’st her, doubting how these things could be
To her a virgin, that on her should come
The Holy Ghost, and the power of the Highest
O’ershadow her. This Man, born and now upgrown, 140
To show him worthy of his birth divine
And high prediction, henceforth I expose
To Satan ; let him tempt, and now assay
His utmost subtlety, because he boasts
And vaunts of his great cunning to the throng
Of his apostasy. He might have learnt
Less overweening, since he failed in Job,
Whose constant perseverance overcame
Whate’er his cruel malice could invent.
He now shall know I can produce a man, 150
Of female seed, far abler to resist
All his solicitations, and at length
All his vast force, and drive him back to Hell—
Winning by conquest what the first man lost
By fallacy surprised. But first I mean
To exercise him in the Wilderness ;
There he shall first lay down the rudiments
Of his great warfare, ere I send him forth
To conquer Sin and Death, the two grand foes.
By humiliation and strong sufferance 160
His weakness shall o’ercome Satanic strength,
And all the world, and mass of sinful flesh ;
That all the Angels and ethereal Powers—
They now, and men hereafter—may discern

From what consummate virtue I have chose
This perfect man, by merit called my Son,
To earn salvation for the sons of men."

So spake the Eternal Father, and all Heaven
Admiring stood a space ; then into hymns
Burst forth, and in celestial measures moved, 170
Circling the throne and singing, while the hand
Sung with the voice, and this the argument :—

" Victory and triumph to the Son of God,
Now entering his great duel, not of arms,
But to vanquish by wisdom hellish wiles !
The Father knows the Son ; therefore secure
Ventures his filial virtue, though untried,
Against whate'er may tempt, whate'er seduce,
Allure, or terrify, or undermine.
Be frustrate, all ye stratagems of Hell, 180
And, devilish machinations, come to nought !"

So they in Heaven their odes and vigils tuned.
Meanwhile the Son of God, who yet some days
Lodged in Bethabara, where John baptized,
Musing and much revolving in his breast
How best the mighty work he might begin
Of Saviour to mankind, and which way first
Publish his godlike office now mature,
One day forth walked alone, the Spirit leading
And his deep thoughts, the better to converse 190
With solitude, till, far from track of men,
Thought following thought, and step by step led on,
He entered now the bordering Desert wild,
And, with dark shades and rocks environed round,
His holy meditations thus pursued :—

" O what a multitude of thoughts at once
Awakened in me swarm, while I consider
What from within I feel myself, and hear
What from without comes often to my ears,

Ill sorting with my present state compared ! 200
When I was yet a child, no childish play
To me was pleasing ; all my mind was set
Serious to learn and know, and thence to do,
What might be public good ; myself I thought
Born to that end, born to promote all truth,
All righteous things. Therefore, above my years,
The Law of God I read, and found it sweet ;
Made it my whole delight, and in it grew
To such perfection that, ere yet my age
Had measured twice six years, at our great Feast 210
I went into the Temple, there to hear
The teachers of our Law, and to propose
What might improve my knowledge or their own,
And was admired by all. Yet this not all
To which my spirit aspired. Victorious deeds
Flamed in my heart, heroic acts—one while
To rescue Israel from the Roman yoke ;
Then to subdue and quell, o'er all the earth,
Brute violence and proud tyrannic power,
Till truth were freed, and equity restored : 220
Yet held it more humane, more heavenly, first
By winning words to conquer willing hearts,
And make persuasion do the work of fear ;
At least to try, and teach the erring soul,
Not wilfully misdoing, but unaware
Misled ; the stubborn only to subdue.
These growing thoughts my mother soon perceiving,
By words at times cast forth, inly rejoiced,
And said to me apart, ' High are thy thoughts,
O Son ! but nourish them, and let them soar 230
To what highth sacred virtue and true worth
Can raise them, though above example high ;
By matchless deeds express thy matchless Sire.
For know, thou art no son of mortal man ;

Though men esteem thee low of parentage,
Thy Father is the Eternal King who rules
All Heaven and Earth, Angels and sons of men.
A messenger from God foretold thy birth
Conceived in me a virgin ; he foretold
Thou shouldst be great, and sit on David's throne, 240
And of thy kingdom there should be no end.
At thy nativity a glorious quire
Of Angels, in the fields of Bethlehem, sung
To shepherds, watching at their folds by night,
And told them the Messiah now was born,
Where they might see him ; and to thee they came,
Directed to the manger where thou lay'st ;
For in the inn was left no better room.
A star, not seen before, in heaven appearing,
Guided the wise men thither from the East, 250
To honour thee with incense, myrrh, and gold ;
By whose bright course led on they found the place,
Affirming it thy star, new-graven in heaven,
By which they knew thee King of Israel born.
Just Simeon and prophetic Anna, warned
By vision, found thee in the Temple, and spake,
Before the altar and the vested priest,
Like things of thee to all that present stood.'
This having heard, straight I again revolved
The Law and Prophets, searching what was writ 260
Concerning the Messiah, to our scribes
Known partly, and soon found of whom they spake
I am—this chiefly, that my way must lie
Through many a hard assay, even to the death,
Ere I the promised kingdom can attain,
Or work redemption for mankind, whose sins'
Full weight must be transferred upon my head.
Yet, neither thus disheartened or dismayed,
The time prefixed I waited ; when behold

The Baptist (of whose birth I oft had heard, 270
Not knew by sight) now come, who was to come
Before Messiah, and his way prepare !
I, as all others, to his baptism came,
Which I believed was from above ; but he
Straight knew me, and with loudest voice proclaimed
Me him (for it was shown him so from Heaven)—
Me him whose harbinger he was ; and first
Refused on me his baptism to confer,
As much his greater, and was hardly won.
But, as I rose out of the laving stream, 280
Heaven opened her eternal doors, from whence
The Spirit descended on me like a dove ;
And last, the sum of all, my Father's voice,
Audibly heard from Heaven, pronounced me his,
Me his beloved Son, in whom alone
He was well pleased : by which I knew the time
Now full, that I no more should live obscure,
But openly begin, as best becomes
The authority which I derived from Heaven.
And now by some strong motion I am led 290
Into this wilderness ; to what intent
I learn not yet. Perhaps I need not know ;
For what concerns my knowledge God reveals."

So spake our Morning Star, then in his rise,
And, looking round, on every side beheld
A pathless desert, dusk with horrid shades.
The way he came not having marked, return
Was difficult, by human steps untrod ;
And he still on was led, but with such thoughts
Accompanied of things past and to come 300
Lodged in his breast as well might recommend
Such solitude before choicest society.

Full forty days he passed—whether on hill
Sometimes, anon in shady vale, each night

Under the covert of some ancient oak
Or cedar to defend him from the dew,
Or harboured in one cave, is not revealed ;
Nor tasted human food, nor hunger felt,
Till those days ended ; hungered then at last
Among wild beasts. They at his sight grew mild, 310
Nor sleeping him nor waking harmed ; his walk
The fiery serpent fled and noxious worm ;
The lion and fierce tiger glared aloof.
But now an aged man in rural weeds,
Following, as seemed, the quest of some stray ewe,
Or withered sticks to gather, which might serve
Against a winter's day, when winds blow keen,
To warm him wet returned from field at eve,
He saw approach ; who first with curious eye
Perused him, then with words thus uttered spake :— 320

“ Sir, what ill chance hath brought thee to this place,
So far from path or road of men, who pass
In troop or caravan ? for single none
Durst ever, who returned, and dropt not here
His carcass, pined with hunger and with droughth.
I ask the rather, and the more admire,
For that to me thou seem'st the man whom late
Our new baptizing Prophet at the ford
Of Jordan honoured so, and called thee Son
Of God. I saw and heard, for we sometimes 330
Who dwell this wild, constrained by want, come forth
To town or village nigh (nighest is far),
Where aught we hear, and curious are to hear,
What happens new ; fame also finds us out.”

To whom the Son of God :—“ Who brought me
hither
Will bring me hence ; no other guide I seek.”

“ By miracle he may,” replied the swain ;
“ What other way I see not ; for we here

Live on tough roots and stubs, to thirst inured
More than the camel, and to drink go far— 340
Men to much misery and hardship born.
But, if thou be the Son of God, command
That out of these hard stones be made thee bread ;
So shalt thou save thyself, and us relieve
With food, whereof we wretched seldom taste.”

He ended, and the Son of God replied :—
“ Think’st thou such force in bread ? Is it not written
(For I discern thee other than thou seem’st),
Man lives not by bread only, but each word
Proceeding from the mouth of God, who fed 350
Our fathers here with manna ? In the Mount
Moses was forty days, nor eat nor drank ;
And forty days Eliah without food
Wandered this barren waste ; the same I now.
Why dost thou, then, suggest to me distrust,
Knowing who I am, as I know who *thou* art ?”

Whom thus answered the Arch-Fiend, now undis-
guised :—

“ ’Tis true, I am that Spirit unfortunate
Who, leagued with millions more in rash revolt,
Kept not my happy station, but was driven 360
With them from bliss to the bottomless Deep—
Yet to that hideous place not so confined
By rigour unconniving but that oft,
Leaving my dolorous prison, I enjoy
Large liberty to round this globe of Earth,
Or range in the Air ; nor from the Heaven of Heavens
Hath He excluded my resort sometimes.
I came, among the Sons of God, when he
Gave up into my hands Uzzean Job,
To prove him, and illustrate his high worth ; 370
And, when to all his Angels he proposed
To draw the proud King Ahab into fraud,

That he might fall in Ramoth, they demurring,
I undertook that office, and the tongues
Of all his flattering prophets glibbed with lies
To his destruction, as I had in charge :
For what He bids I do. Though I have lost
Much lustre of my native brightness, lost
To be beloved of God, I have not lost
To love, at least contemplate and admire, 380
What I see excellent in good, or fair,
Or virtuous ; I should so have lost all sense.
What can be then less in me than desire
To see thee and approach thee, whom I know
Declared the Son of God, to hear attent
Thy wisdom, and behold thy godlike deeds ?
Men generally think me much a foe
To all mankind. Why should I ? they to me
Never did wrong or violence. By them .
I lost not what I lost ; rather by them 390
I gained what I have gained, and with them dwell
Copartner in these regions of the World,
If not disposer—lend them oft my aid,
Oft my advice by presages and signs,
And answers, oracles, portents, and dreams,
Whereby they may direct their future life.
Envy, they say, excites me, thus to gain
Companions of my misery and woe !
At first it may be ; but, long since with woe
Nearer acquainted, now I feel by proof 400
That fellowship in pain divides not smart,
Nor lightens aught each man's peculiar load ;
Small consolation, then, were Man adjoined.
This wounds me most (what can it less ?) that Man,
Man fallen, shall be restored, I never more."

To whom our Saviour sternly thus replied :--
" Deservedly thou griev'st, composed of lies

From the beginning, and in lies wilt end,
Who boast'st release from Hell, and leave to come
Into the Heaven of Heavens. Thou com'st, indeed, 410
As a poor miserable captive thrall
Comes to the place where he before had sat
Among the prime in splendour, now deposed,
Ejected, emptied, gazed, unpitied, shunned,
A spectacle of ruin, or of scorn,
To all the host of Heaven. The happy place
Imparts to thee no happiness, no joy—
Rather inflames thy torment, representing
Lost bliss, to thee no more communicable ;
So never more in Hell than when in Heaven. 420
But thou art serviceable to Heaven's King !
Wilt thou impute to obedience what thy fear
Extorts, or pleasure to do ill excites ?
What but thy malice moved thee to misdeem
(Of righteous Job), then cruelly to afflict him
With all inflictions ? but his patience won.
The other service was thy chosen task,
To be a liar in four hundred mouths ;
For lying is thy sustenance, thy food.
Yet thou pretend'st to truth ! all oracles 430
By thee are given, and what confessed more true
Among the nations ? That hath been thy craft,
By mixing somewhat true to vent more lies.
But what have been thy answers ? what but dark,
Ambiguous, and with double sense deluding,
Which they who asked have seldom understood,
And, not well understood, as good not known ?
Who ever, by consulting at thy shrine,
Returned the wiser, or the more instruct
To fly or follow what concerned him most, 440
And run not sooner to his fatal snare ?
For God hath justly given the nations up

To thy delusions ; justly, since they fell
Idolatrous. But, when his purpose is
Among them to declare his providence,
To thee not known, whence hast thou then thy truth,
But from Him, or his Angels president
In every province, who, themselves disdaining
To approach thy temples, give thee in command
What, to the smallest tittle, thou shalt say 450
To thy adorers ? Thou, with trembling fear,
Or like a fawning parasite, obey'st ;
Then to thyself ascrib'st the truth foretold.
But this thy glory shall be soon retrenched ;
No more shalt thou by oracling abuse
The Gentiles ; henceforth oracles are ceased,
And thou no more with pomp and sacrifice
Shalt be inquired at Delphos or elsewhere—
At least in vain, for they shall find thee mute.
God hath now sent his living Oracle 460
Into the world to teach his final will,
And sends his Spirit of Truth henceforth to dwell
In pious hearts, an inward oracle
To all truth requisite for men to know."

So spake our Saviour ; but the subtle Fiend,
Though inly stung with anger and disdain,
Dissembled, and this answer smooth returned :—

"Sharply thou hast insisted on rebuke,
And urged me hard with doings which not will,
But misery, hath wrested from me. Where 470
Easily canst thou find one miserable
And not enforced oft-times to part from truth,
If it may stand him more in stead to lie,
Say and unsay, feign, flatter, or abjure ?
But thou art placed above me ; thou art Lord ;
From thee I can, and must, submit, endure
Check or reproof, and glad to scape so quit.

Hard are the ways of truth, and rough to walk,
Smooth on the tongue discoursed, pleasing to the ear,
And tunable as sylvan pipe or song ; 480
What wonder, then, if I delight to hear
Her dictates from thy mouth ? most men admire
Virtue who follow not her lore. Permit me
To hear thee when I come (since no man comes),
And talk at least, though I despair to attain.
Thy Father, who is holy, wise, and pure,
Suffers the hypocrite or atheous priest
To tread his sacred courts, and minister
About his altar, handling holy things,
Praying or vowing, and voutsafed his voice 490
To Balaam reprobate, a prophet yet
Inspired : disdain not such access to me."

To whom our Saviour, with unaltered brow :—
"Thy coming hither, though I know thy scope,
I bid not or forbid. Do as thou find'st
Permission from above ; thou canst not more."

He added not ; and Satan, bowing low
His gray dissimulation, disappeared,
Into thin air diffused : for now began
Night with her sullen wing to double-shade 500
The desert ; fowls in their clay nests were couched ;
And now wild beasts came forth the woods to roam.

PARADISE REGAINED

THE SECOND BOOK

MEANWHILE the new-baptized, who yet remained
At Jordan with the Baptist, and had seen
Him whom they heard so late expressly called
Jesus Messiah, Son of God, declared,
And on that high authority had believed,
And with him talked, and with him lodged—I mean
Andrew and Simon, famous after known,
With others, though in Holy Writ not named—
Now missing him, their joy so lately found,
So lately found and so abruptly gone, 10
Began to doubt, and doubted many days,
And, as the days increased, increased their doubt.
Sometimes they thought he might be only shown,
And for a time caught up to God, as once
Moses was in the Mount and missing long,
And the great Thisbite, who on fiery wheels
Rode up to Heaven, yet once again to come.
Therefore, as those young prophets then with care
Sought lost Eliah, so in each place these
Nigh to Bethabara—in Jericho 20
The city of palms, Ænon, and Salem old,
Machærus, and each town or city walled
On this side the broad lake Genezaret,
Or in Peræa—but returned in vain.

Then on the bank of Jordan, by a creek,
Where winds with reeds and osiers whispering play,
Plain fishermen (no greater men them call),
Close in a cottage low together got,
Their unexpected loss and plaints outbreathed :—

“ Alas, from what high hope to what relapse
Unlooked for are we fallen ! Our eyes beheld
Messiah certainly now come, so long
Expected of our fathers ; we have heard
His words, his wisdom full of grace and truth.
‘ Now, now, for sure, deliverance is at hand ;
The kingdom shall to Israel be restored ’ :
Thus we rejoiced, but soon our joy is turned
Into perplexity and new amaze.

For whither is he gone? what accident
Hath rapt him from us? will he now retire
After appearance, and again prolong
Our expectation? God of Israël,
Send thy Messiah forth; the time is come.
Behold the kings of the earth, how they oppress
Thy Chosen, to what highth their power unjust
They have exalted, and behind them cast
All fear of Thee; arise, and vindicate
Thy glory; free thy people from their yoke!
But let us wait; thus far He hath performed—
Sent his Anointed, and to us revealed him,
By his great Prophet pointed at and shown
In public, and with him we have conversed.
Let us be glad of this, and all our fears
Lay on his providence; He will not fail,
Nor will withdraw him now, nor will recall—
Mock us with his blest sight, then snatch him hence:
Soon we shall see our hope, our joy, return."

Thus they out of their plaints new hope resume
To find whom at the first they found unsought.

But to his mother Mary, when she saw 60
Others returned from baptism, not her Son,
Nor left at Jordan tidings of him none,
Within her breast though calm, her breast though
pure,

Motherly cares and fears got head, and raised
Some troubled thoughts, which she in sighs thus clad :—

“ Oh, what avails me now that honour high,
To have conceived of God, or that salute,
‘ Hail, highly favoured, among women blest !’
While I to sorrows am no less advanced,
And fears as eminent above the lot 70

Of other women, by the birth I bore :
In such a season born, when scarce a shed
Could be obtained to shelter him or me
From the bleak air ? A stable was our warmth,
A manger his ; yet soon enforced to fly
Thence into Egypt, till the murderous king
Were dead, who sought his life, and, missing, filled
With infant blood the streets of Bethlechem.

From Egypt home returned, in Nazareth
Hath been our dwelling many years ; his life 80
Private, unactive, calm, contemplative,
Little suspicious to any king. But now,

Full grown to man, acknowledged, as I hear,
By John the Baptist, and in public shown,
Son owned from Heaven by his Father’s voice,
I looked for some great change. To honour ? no ;
But trouble, as old Simeon plain foretold,
That to the fall and rising he should be
Of many in Israël, and to a sign

Spoken against—that through my very soul 90
A sword shall pierce. This is my favoured lot,
My exaltation to afflictions high !
Afflicted I may be, it seems, and blest !

I will not argue that, nor will repine.
But where delays he now? Some great intent
Conceals him. When twelve years he scarce had
seen,

I lost him, but so found as well I saw
He could not lose himself, but went about
His Father's business. What he meant I mused—
Since understand ; much more his absence now 100
Thus long to some great purpose he obscures.
But I to wait with patience am inured ;
My heart hath been a storehouse long of things
And sayings laid up, portending strange events."

Thus Mary, pondering oft, and oft to mind
Recalling what remarkably had passed
Since first her salutation heard, with thoughts
Meekly composed awaited the fulfilling :
The while her Son, tracing the desert wild,
Sole, but with holiest meditations fed, 110
Into himself descended, and at once
All his great work to come before him set—
How to begin, how to accomplish best
His end of being on Earth, and mission high.
For Satan, with sly preface to return,
Had left him vacant, and with speed was gone
Up to the middle region of thick air,
Where all his Potentates in council sat.
There, without sign of boast, or sign of joy,
Solicitous and blank, he thus began :— 120

" Princes, Heaven's ancient Sons, Ethereal Thrones—
Demonian Spirits now, from the element
Each of his reign allotted rightlier called
Powers of Fire, Air, Water, and Earth beneath
(So may we hold our place and these mild seats
Without new trouble !)—such an enemy
Is risen to invade us, who no less

Threatens than our expulsion down to Hell.
I, as I undertook, and with the vote
Consenting in full frequence was empowered, 130
Have found him, viewed him, tasted him ; but find
Far other labour to be undergone
Than when I dealt with Adam, first of men,
Though Adam by his wife's allurements fell,
However to this Man inferior far—
If he be Man by mother's side, at least
With more than human gifts from Heaven adorned,
Perfections absolute, graces divine,
And amplitude of mind to greatest deeds.
Therefore I am returned, lest confidence 140
Of my success with Eve in Paradise
Deceive ye to persuasion over-sure
Of like succeeding here. I summon all
Rather to be in readiness with hand
Or counsel to assist, lest I, who erst
Thought none my equal, now be overmatched."

So spake the old Serpent, doubting, and from all
With clamour was assured their utmost aid
At his command ; when from amidst them rose
Belial, the dissolutes Spirit that fell, 150
The sensualest, and, after Asmodai,
The fleshliest Incubus, and thus advised :—

"Set women in his eye and in his walk,
Among daughters of men the fairest found.
Many are in each region passing fair
As the noon sky, more like to goddesses
Than mortal creatures, graceful and discreet,
Expert in amorous arts, enchanting tongues
Persuasive, virgin majesty with mild
And sweet allayed, yet terrible to approach, 160
Skilled to retire, and in retiring draw
Hearts after them tangled in amorous nets.

Such object hath the power to soften and tame
Severest temper, smooth the rugged'st brow,
Enerve, and with voluptuous hope dissolve,
Draw out with credulous desire, and lead
At will the manliest, resolute'st breast,
As the magnetic hardest iron draws.
Women, when nothing else, beguiled the heart
Of wisest Solomon, and made him build, 170
And made him bow, to the gods of his wives."

To whom quick answer Satan thus returned :—
"Belial, in much uneven scale thou weigh'st
All others by thyself. Because of old
Thou thyself doat'st on womankind, admiring
Their shape, their colour, and attractive grace,
None are, thou think'st, but taken with such toys.
Before the Flood, thou, with thy lusty crew,
False titled Sons of God, roaming the Earth,
Cast wanton eyes on the daughters of men, 180
And coupled with them, and begot a race.
Have we not seen, or by relation heard,
In courts and regal chambers how thou lurk'st,
In wood or grove, by mossy fountain-side,
In valley or green meadow, to waylay
Some beauty rare, Calisto, Clymene,
Daphne, or Semele, Antiopa,
Or Amydone, Syrinx, many more
Too long-- then lay'st thy scapes on names adored,
Apollo, Neptune, Jupiter, or Pan, 190
Satyr, or Faun, or Silvan? But these haunts
Delight not all. Among the sons of men
How many have with a smile made small account
Of beauty and her lures, easily scorned
All her assaults, on worthier things intent!
Remember that Pellean conqueror,
A youth, how all the beauties of the East

He slightly view'd, and slightly overpass'd ;
How he surnamed of Africa dismissed,
In his prime youth, the fair Iberian maid. 200
For Solomon, he lived at ease, and, full
Of honour, wealth, high fare, aimed not beyond
Higher design than to enjoy his state ;
Thence to the bait of women lay exposed.
But he whom we attempt is wiser far
Than Solomon, of more exalted mind,
Made and set wholly on the accomplishment
Of greatest things. What woman will you find,
Though of this age the wonder and the fame,
On whom his leisure will voutsafe an eye 210
Of fond desire ? Or should she, confident,
As sitting queen adored on Beauty's throne,
Descend with all her winning charms begirt
To enamour, as the zone of Venus once
Wrought that effect on Jove (so fables tell),
How would one look from his majestic brow,
Seated as on the top of Virtue's hill,
Discountenance her despised, and put to rout
All her array, her female pride deject,
Or turn to reverent awe ! For Beauty stands 220
In the admiration only of weak minds
Led captive ; cease to admire, and all her plumes
Fall flat, and shrink into a trivial toy,
At every sudden slighting quite abashed.
Therefore with manlier objects we must try
His constancy—with such as have more show
Of worth, of honour, glory, and popular praise
(Rocks whereon greatest men have ofttest wrecked) ;
Or that which only seems to satisfy
Lawful desires of nature, not beyond. 230
And now I know he hungers, where no food
Is to be found, in the wide Wilderness :

The rest commit to me ; I shall let pass
No advantage, and his strength as oft assay."

He ceased, and heard their grant in loud acclaim ;
Then forthwith to him takes a chosen band
Of Spirits likest to himself in guile,
To be at hand and at his beck appear,
If cause were to unfold some active scene
Of various persons, each to know his part ; 240
Then to the desert takes with these his flight,
Where still, from shade to shade, the Son of God,
After forty days' fasting, had remained,
Now hungering first, and to himself thus said :—

"Where will this end ? Four times ten days I have
passed

Wandering this woody maze, and human food
Nor tasted, nor had appetite. That fast
To virtue I impute not, or count part
Of what I suffer here. If nature need not,
(Or God support nature without repast, 250
Though needing, what praise is it to endure ?
But now I feel I hunger ; which declares
Nature hath need of what she asks. Yet God
Can satisfy that need some other way,
Though hunger still remain. So it remain
Without this body's wasting, I content me,
And from the sting of famine fear no harm ;
Nor mind it, fed with better thoughts, that feed
Me hungering more to do my Father's will."

It was the hour of night, when thus the Son 260
Communed in silent walk, then laid him down
Under the hospitable covert nigh
(Of trees thick interwoven. There he slept,
And dreamed, as appetite is wont to dream,
(Of meats and drinks, nature's refreshment sweet.
Him thought he by the brook of Cherith stood,

And saw the ravens with their horny beaks
Food to Elijah bringing even and morn—
Though ravenous, taught to abstain from what they
brought ;

He saw the Prophet also, how he fled 270
Into the desert, and how there he slept
Under a juniper—then how, awaked,
He found his supper on the coals prepared,
And by the Angel was bid rise and eat,
And eat the second time after repose,
The strength whereof sufficed him forty days :
Sometimes that with Elijah he partook,
Or as a guest with Daniel at his pulse.

Thus wore out night ; and now the herald lark 280
Left his ground-nest, high towering to descry
The Morn's approach, and greet her with his song.

As lightly from his grassy couch up rose
Our Saviour, and found all was but a dream ;
Fasting he went to sleep, and fasting waked.
Up to a hill anon his steps he reared,
From whose high top to ken the prospect round,
If cottage were in view, sheep-cote, or herd ;
But cottage, herd, or sheep-cote, none he saw—
Only in a bottom saw a pleasant grove,
With chant of tuneful birds resounding loud. 290

Thither he bent his way, determined there
To rest at noon, and entered soon the shade
High-roofed, and walks beneath, and alleys brown,
That opened in the midst a woody scene ;
Nature's own work it seemed (Nature taught Art),
And, to a superstitious eye, the haunt
Of wood-gods and wood-nymphs. He viewed it
round ;

When suddenly a man before him stood,
Not rustic as before, but seemlier clad,

As one in city or court or palace bred, 300
And with fair speech these words to him addressed :—

“With granted leave officious I return,
But much more wonder that the Son of God
In this wild solitude so long should bide,
Of all things destitute, and, well I know,
Not without hunger. Others of some note,
As story tells, have trod this wilderness :
The fugitive bond-woman, with her son,
Outcast Nebaioth, yet found here relief
By a providing Angel ; all the race 310
Of Israel here had famished, had not God
Rained from heaven manna ; and that Prophet bold,
Native of Thebez, wandering here, was fed
Twice by a voice inviting him to eat.
Of thee these forty days none hath regard,
Forty and more deserted here indeed.”

To whom thus Jesus :—“What conclud’st thou hence?
They all had need ; I, as thou seest, have none.”

“How hast thou hunger then ?” Satan replied.
“Tell me, if food were now before thee set, 320
Wouldst thou not eat ?” “Thereafter as I like
The giver,” answered Jesus. “Why should that
Cause thy refusal ?” said the subtle Fiend.
“Hast thou not right to all created things ?
Owe not all creatures, by just right, to thee
Duty and service, nor to stay till bid,
But tender all their power ? Nor mention I
Meats by the law unclean, or offered first
To idols—those young Daniel could refuse ;
Nor proffered by an enemy—though who 330
Would scruple that, with want oppressed ? Behold,
Nature ashamed, or, better to express,
Troubled, that thou shouldst hunger, hath purveyed
From all the elements her choicest store,

To treat thee as beseems, and as her Lord
With honour. Only deign to sit and eat."

He spake no dream ; for, as his words had end,
Our Saviour, lifting up his eyes, beheld,
In ample space under the broadest shade,
A table richly spread in regal mode, 340
With dishes piled and meats of noblest sort
And savour—beasts of chase, or fowl of game,
In pastry built, or from the spit, or boiled,
Grisamber-steamed ; all fish, from sea or shore,
Freshet or purling brook, of shell or fin,
And exquisitest name, for which was drained
Pontus, and Lucrine bay, and Afric coast.
Alas ! how simple, to these cates compared,
Was that crude apple that diverted Iſve !
And at a stately sideboard, by the wine, 350
That fragrant smell diffused, in order stood
Tall stripling youths rich-clad, of fairer hue
Than Ganymed or Hylas ; distant more,
Under the trees now tripped, now solemn stood,
Nymphs of Diana's train, and Naiades
With fruits and flowers from Amalthea's horn,
And ladies of the Hesperides, that seemed
Fairer than feigned of old, or fabled since
Of faery damsels met in forest wide
By knights of Logres, or of Lyones, 360
Lancelot, or Pelleas, or Pellenore.
And all the while harmonious airs were heard
Of chiming strings or charming pipes ; and winds
Of gentlest gale Arabian odours fanned
From their soft wings, and Flora's earliest smells.
Such was the splendour ; and the Tempter now
His invitation earnestly renewed :—

"What doubts the Son of God to sit and eat ?
These are not fruits forbidden ; no interdict

Defends the touching of these viands pure ; 370
Their taste no knowledge works, at least of evil,
But life preserves, destroys life's enemy,
Hunger, with sweet restorative delight.
All these are Spirits of air, and woods, and springs,
Thy gentle ministers, who come to pay
Thee homage, and acknowledge thee their Lord.
What doubt'st thou, Son of God ? Sit down and eat."

To whom thus Jesus temperately replied :—
"Said'st thou not that to all things I had right ?
And who withholds my power that right to use ? 380
Shall I receive by gift what of my own,
When and where likes me best, I can command ?
I can at will, doubt not, as soon as thou,
Command a table in this wilderness,
And call swift flights of Angels ministrant,
Arrayed in glory, on my cup to attend :
Why shouldst thou, then, obtrude this diligence
In vain, where no acceptance it can find ?
And with my hunger what hast thou to do ?
Thy pompous delicacies I contemn, 390
And count thy specious gifts no gifts, but guiles."

To whom thus answered Satan, malecontent :—
"That I have also power to give thou sceest ;
If of that power I bring thee voluntary
What I might have bestowed on whom I pleased,
And rather opportunely in this place
Chose to impart to thy apparent need,
Why shouldst thou not accept it ? But I see
What I can do or offer is suspect.
Of these things others quickly will dispose, 400
Whose pains have earned the far-fet spoil." With
that

Both table and provision vanished quite,
With sound of harpies' wings and talons heard ;

Only the importune Tempter still remained,
And with these words his temptation pursued :—

“ By hunger, that each other creature tames,
Thou art not to be harmed, therefore not moved ;
Thy temperance, invincible besides,
For no allurements yields to appetite ;
And all thy heart is set on high designs, 410
High actions. But wherewith to be achieved ?
Great acts require great means of enterprise ;
Thou art unknown, unfriended, low of birth,
A carpenter thy father known, thyself
Bred up in poverty and straits at home,
Lost in a desert here and hunger-bit.
Which way, or from what hope, dost thou aspire
To greatness ? whence authority deriv’st ?
What followers, what retinue canst thou gain,
Or at thy heels the dizzy multitude, 420
Longer than thou canst feed them on thy cost ?
Money brings honour, friends, conquest, and realms.
What raised Antipater the Edomite,
And his son Herod placed on Judah’s throne,
Thy throne, but gold, that got him puissant friends ?
Therefore, if at great things thou wouldst arrive,
Get riches first, get wealth, and treasure heap—
Not difficult, if thou hearken to me.
Riches are mine, fortune is in my hand ;
They whom I favour thrive in wealth amain, 430
While virtue, valour, wisdom, sit in want.”

To whom thus Jesus patiently replied :—
“ Yet wealth without these three is impotent
To gain dominion, or to keep it gained—
Witness those ancient empires of the earth,
In highth of all their flowing wealth dissolved ;
But men endued with these have oft attained,
In lowest poverty, to highest deeds—

Gidcon, and Jephtha, and the shepherd lad
Whose offspring on the throne of Judah sat 440
So many ages, and shall yet regain
That seat, and reign in Israel without end.
Among the Heathen (for throughout the world
To me is not unknown what hath been done
Worthy of memorial) canst thou not remember
Quintius, Fabricius, Curius, Regulus?—
For I esteem those names of men so poor,
Who could do mighty things, and could contemn
Riches, though offered from the hand of Kings.
And what in me seems wanting but that I 450
May also in this poverty as soon
Accomplish what they did, perhaps and more?
Extol not riches, then, the toil of fools,
The wise man's cumbrance, if not snare; more apt
To slacken virtue and abate her edge
Than prompt her to do aught may merit praise.
What if with like aversion I reject
Riches and realms! Yet not for that a crown,
Golden in show, is but a wreath of thorns,
Brings dangers, troubles, cares, and sleepless nights, 460
To him who wears the regal diadem,
When on his shoulders each man's burden lies;
For therein stands the office of a king,
His honour, virtue, merit, and chief praise,
That for the public all this weight he bears.
Yet he who reigns within himself, and rules
Passions, desires, and fears, is more a king—
Which every wise and virtuous man attains;
And who attains not ill aspires to rule
Cities of men, or headstrong multitudes, 470
Subject himself to anarchy within,
Or lawless passions in him, which he serves.
But to guide nations in the way of truth

By saving doctrine, and from error lead
To know, and, knowing, worship God aright,
Is yet more kingly. This attracts the soul,
Governs the inner man, the nobler part ;
That other o'er the body only reigns,
And oft by force—which to a generous mind
So reigning can be no sincere delight. 480
Besides, to give a kingdom hath been thought
Greater and nobler done, and to lay down
Far more magnanimous, than to assume.
Riches are needless, then, both for themselves,
And for thy reason why they should be sought—
To gain a sceptre, ofttest better missed."

PARADISE REGAINED

THE THIRD BOOK

So spake the Son of God ; and Satan stood
A while as mute, confounded what to say,
What to reply, confuted and convinced
Of his weak arguing and fallacious drift ;
At length, collecting all his serpent wiles,
With soothing words renewed, him thus accosts :—

“ I see thou know'st what is of use to know,
What best to say canst say, to do canst do ;
Thy actions to thy words accord ; thy words
To thy large heart give utterance due ; thy heart 10
Contains of good, wise, just, the perfect shape.
Should kings and nations from thy mouth consult,
Thy counsel would be as the oracle
Urim and Thummim, those oraculous gems
On Aaron's breast, or tongue of Seers old
Infallible ; or, wert thou sought to deeds
That might require the array of war, thy skill
Of conduct would be such that all the world
Could not sustain thy prowess, or subsist
In battle, though against thy few in arms. 20
These godlike virtues wherefore dost thou hide ?
Affecting private life, or more obscure
In savage wilderness, wherefore deprive

All Earth her wonder at thy acts, thyself
The fame and glory—glory, the reward
That sole excites to high attempts the flame
Of most erected spirits, most tempered pure
Ethereal, who all pleasures else despise,
All treasures and all gain esteem as dross,
And dignities and powers, all but the highest? 30
Thy years are ripe, and over-ripe. The son
Of Macedonian Philip had ere these
Won Asia, and the throne of Cyrus held
At his dispose; young Scipio had brought down
The Carthaginian pride; young Pompey quelled
The Pontic king, and in triumph had rode.
Yet years, and to ripe years judgment mature,
Quench not the thirst of glory, but augment.
Great Julius, whom now all the world admires,
'The more he grew in years, the more inflamed 40
With glory, wept that he had lived so long
Inglorious. But thou yet art not too late."

To whom our Saviour calmly thus replied:—
"Thou neither dost persuade me to seek wealth
For empire's sake, nor empire to affect
For glory's sake, by all thy argument.
For what is glory but the blaze of fame,
The people's praise, if always praise unmixed?
And what the people but a herd confused,
A miscellaneous rabble, who extol 50
Things vulgar, and, well weighed, scarce worth the
praise?
They praise and they admire they know not what,
And know not whom, but as one leads the other;
And what delight to be by such extolled,
To live upon their tongues, and be their talk?
Of whom to be dispraised were no small praise—
His lot who dares be singularly good.

The intelligent among them and the wise
Are few, and glory scarce of few is raised.
This is true glory and renown—when God, 60
Looking on the Earth, with approbation marks
The just man, and divulges him through Heaven
To all his Angels, who with true applause
Recount his praises. Thus he did to Job,
When, to extend his fame through Heaven and Earth,
As thou to thy reproach may'st well remember,
He asked thee, 'Hast thou seen my servant Job?'
Famous he was in Heaven; on Earth less known,
Where glory is false glory, attributed
To things not glorious, men not worthy of fame. 70
They err who count it glorious to subdue
By conquest far and wide, to overrun
Large countries, and in field great battles win,
Great cities by assault. What do these worthies
But rob and spoil, burn, slaughter, and enslave
Peaceable nations, neighbouring or remote,
Made captive, yet deserving freedom more
Than those their conquerors, who leave behind
Nothing but ruin wheresoe'er they rove,
And all the flourishing works of peace destroy; 80
Then swell with pride, and must be titled Gods,
Great Benefactors of mankind, Deliverers,
Worshiped with temple, priest, and sacrifice?
One is the son of Jove, of Mars the other;
Till conqueror Death discover them scarce men,
Rolling in brutish vices, and deformed,
Violent or shameful death their due reward.
But, if there be in glory aught of good,
It may by means far different be attained,
Without ambition, war, or violence— 90
By deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent,
By patience, temperance. I mention still

Him whom thy wrongs, with saintly patience borne,
 Made famous in a land and times obscure ;
 Who names not now with honour patient Job ?
 Poor Socrates (who next more memorable ?),
 By what he taught and suffered for so doing,
 For truth's sake suffering death unjust, lives now
 Equal in fame to proudest conquerors.

Yet, if for fame and glory aught be done, 100
 Aught suffered—if young African for fame
 His wasted country freed from Punic rage—
 The deed becomes unpraised, the man at least,
 And loses, though but verbal, his reward.
 Shall I seek glory, then, as vain men seek,
 Oft not deserved ? I seek not mine, but His
 Who sent me, and thereby witness whence I am."

To whom the Tempter, murmuring, thus replied :—
 "Think not so slight of glory, therein least
 Resembling thy great Father. He seeks glory, 110
 And for his glory all things made, all things
 Orders and governs ; nor content in Heaven,
 By all his Angels glorified, requires
 Glory from men, from all men, good or bad,
 Wise or unwise, no difference, no exemption.
 Above all sacrifice, or hallowed gift,
 Glory he requires, and glory he receives,
 Promiscuous from all nations, Jew, or Greek,
 Or Barbarous, nor exception hath declared ;
 From us, his foes pronounced, glory he exacts." 120

To whom our Saviour fervently replied :—
 "And reason ; since his Word all things produced,
 Though chiefly not for glory as prime end,
 But to show forth his goodness, and impart
 His good communicable to every soul
 Freely ; of whom what could he less expect
 Than glory and benediction—that is, thanks—

The slightest, easiest, readiest recompense
From them who could return him nothing else,
And, not returning that, would likeliest render 130
Contempt instead, dishonour, obloquy ?
Hard recompense, unsuitable return
For so much good, so much beneficence !
But why should man seek glory, who of his own
Hath nothing, and to whom nothing belongs
But condemnation, ignominy, and shame—
Who, for so many benefits received,
Turned recreant to God, ingrate and false,
And so of all true good himself despoiled ;
Yet, sacrilegious, to himself would take 140
That which to God alone of right belongs ?
Yet so much bounty is in God, such grace,
That who advance his glory, not their own,
Them he himself to glory will advance.”

So spake the Son of God ; and here again
Satan had not to answer, but stood struck
With guilt of his own sin—for he himself,
Insatiable of glory, had lost all ;
Yet of another plea bethought him soon :—

“ Of glory, as thou wilt,” said he, “ so deem ; 150
Worth or not worth the seeking, let it pass.
But to a Kingdom thou art born—ordained
To sit upon thy father David’s throne,
By mother’s side thy father, though thy right
Be now in powerful hands, that will not part
Easily from possession won with arms.
Judæa now and all the Promised Land,
Reduced a province under Roman yoke,
Obeys Tiberius, nor is always ruled
With temperate sway : oft have they violated 160
The Temple, oft the Law, with foul affronts,
Abominations rather, as did once

Antiochus. And think'st thou to regain
Thy right in sitting still, or thus retiring?
So did not Machabeus. He indeed
Retired into the Desert, but with arms;
And o'er a mighty king so oft prevailed
That by strong hand his family obtained,
Though priests, the crown, and David's throne usurped,
With Modin and her suburbs once content. 170

If kingdom move thee not, let move thee zeal
And duty—zeal and duty are not slow,
But on Occasion's forelock watchful wait:
They themselves rather are occasion best—
Zeal of thy Father's house, duty to free
Thy country from her heathen servitude.
So shalt thou best fulfil, best verify,
The Prophets old, who sung thy endless reign—
The happier reign the sooner it begins.
Reign then; what canst thou better do the while?" 180

To whom our Saviour answer thus returned:—
"All things are best fulfilled in their due time;
And time there is for all things, Truth hath said.
If of my reign Prophetic Writ hath told
That it shall never end, so, when begin
The Father in his purpose hath decreed—
He in whose hand all times and seasons roll.
What if he hath decreed that I shall first
Be tried in humble state, and things adverse,
By tribulations, injuries, insults, 190
Contempts, and scorns, and snares, and violence,
Suffering, abstaining, quietly expecting
Without distrust or doubt, that He may know
What I can suffer, how obey? Who best
Can suffer best can do, best reign who first
Well hath obeyed—just trial ere I merit
My exaltation without change or end.

But what concerns it *thee* when I begin
My everlasting Kingdom? Why art *thou*
Solicitous? What moves *thy* inquisition? 200
Know'st thou not that my rising is thy fall,
And my promotion will be thy destruction?"

To whom the Tempter, inly racked, replied:—
"Let that come when it comes. All hope is lost
Of my reception into grace; what worse?
For where no hope is left is left no fear.
If there be worse, the expectation more
Of worse torments me than the feeling can.
I would be at the worst; worst is my port,
My harbour, and my ultimate repose, 210
The end I would attain, my final good.
My error was my error, and my crime
My crime; whatever, for itself condemned,
And will alike be punished, whether thou
Reign or reign not—though to that gentle brow
Willingly I could fly, and hope thy reign,
From that placid aspect and meek regard,
Rather than aggravate my evil state,
Would stand between me and thy Father's ire
(Whose ire I dread more than the fire of Hell) 220
A shelter and a kind of shading cool
Interposition, as a summer's cloud.
If I, then, to the worst that can be haste,
Why move thy feet so slow to what is best?
Happiest, both to thyself and all the world,
That thou, who worthiest art, shouldst be their king!
Perhaps thou linger'st in deep thoughts detained
Of the enterprise so hazardous and high!
No wonder; for, though in thee be united
What of perfection can in Man be found, 230
Or human nature can receive, consider
Thy life hath yet been private, most part spent

At home, scarce viewed the Galilean towns,
And once a year Jerusalem few days'
Short sojourn ; and what thence couldst thou observe ?
The world thou hast not seen, much less her glory,
Empires, and monarchs, and their radiant courts—
Best school of best experience, quickest in sight
In all things that to greatest actions lead.
The wisest, unexperienced, will be ever 240
Timorous, and loth, with novice modesty
(As he who, seeking asses, found a kingdom)
Irresolute, unhardy, unadventurous.
But I will bring thee where thou soon shalt quit
Those rudiments, and see before thine eyes
The monarchies of the Earth, their pomp and state—
Sufficient introduction to inform
Thee, of thyself so apt, in regal arts,
And regal mysteries ; that thou may'st know
How best their opposition to withstand." 250

With that (such power was given him then), he took
The Son of God up to a mountain high.

It was a mountain at whose verdant feet
A spacious plain outstretched in circuit wide
Lay pleasant ; from his side two rivers flowed,
The one winding, the other straight, and left between
Fair champaign, with less rivers interveined,
Then meeting joined their tribute to the sea.
Fertile of corn the glebe, of oil, and wine ;
With herds the pasture thronged, with flocks the
hills ; 21

Huge cities and high towered, that well might seem
The seats of mightiest monarchs ; and so large
The prospect was that here and there was room
For barren desert, fountainless and dry.
To this high mountain-top the Tempter brought
Our Saviour, and new train of words began :—

“ Well have we speeded, and o’er hill and dale,
Forest, and field, and flood, temples and towers,
Cut shorter many a league. Here thou behold’st
Assyria, and her empire’s ancient bounds, 270
Araxes and the Caspian lake ; thence on
As far as Indus east, Euphrates west,
And oft beyond ; to south the Persian bay,
And, inaccessible, the Arabian drouth :
Here, Nineveh, of length within her wall
Several days’ journey, built by Ninus old,
Of that first golden monarchy the seat,
And seat of Salmanassar, whose success
Israel in long captivity still mourns :
There Babylon, the wonder of all tongues, 280
As ancient, but rebuilt by him who twice
Judah and all thy father David’s house
Led captive, and Jerusalem laid waste,
Till Cyrus set them free ; Persepolis,
His city, there thou seest, and Bactra there ;
Ecbatana her structure vast there shows,
And Hecatompylos her hundred gates ;
There Susa by Choaspes, amber stream,
The drink of none but kings ; of later fame,
Built by Emathian or by Parthian hands, 290
The great Seleucia, Nisibis, and there
Artaxata, Tcredon, Ctesiphon,
Turning with easy eye, thou may’st behold.
All these the Parthian (now some ages past
By great Arsaces led, who founded first
That empire) under his dominion holds,
From the luxurious kings of Antioch won.
And just in time thou com’st to have a view
Of his great power ; for now the Parthian king
In Ctesiphon hath gathered all his host 300
Against the Scythian, whose incursions wild

Have wasted Sogdiana ; to her aid
He marches now in haste. See, though from far,
His thousands, in what martial equipage
They issue forth, steel bows and shafts their arms,
Of equal dread in flight or in pursuit—
All horsemen, in which fight they most excel ;
See how in warlike muster they appear,
In rhombs, and wedges, and half-moons, and wings.”

He looked, and saw what numbers numberless 310
The city gates outpoured, light-armed troops
In coats of mail and military pride.
In mail their horses clad, yet fleet and strong,
Prancing their riders bore, the flower and choice
Of many provinces from bound to bound—
From Arachosia, from Candaor east,
And Margiana, to the Hyrcanian cliffs
Of Caucasus, and dark Iberian dales ;
From Atropatia, and the neighbouring plains
Of Adiabene, Media, and the south 320
Of Susiana, to Balsara’s haven.

He saw them in their forms of battle ranged,
How quick they wheeled, and flying behind them shot
Sharp sleet of arrowy showers against the face
Of their pursuers, and overcame by flight ;
The field all iron cast a gleaming brown.
Nor wanted clouds of foot, nor, on each horn,
Cuirassiers all in steel for standing fight,
Chariots, or elephants indorsed with towers
Of archers ; nor of labouring pioneers 330
A multitude, with spades and axes armed,
To lay hills plain, fell woods, or valleys fill,
Or where plain was raise hill, or overlay
With bridges rivers proud, as with a yoke :
Mules after these, camels and dromedaries,
And waggons fraught with utensils of war.

Such forces met not, nor so wide a camp,
When Agrican, with all his northern powers,
Besieged Albracca, as romances tell,
The city of Gallaphrone, from thence to win 340
The fairest of her sex, Angelica,

'His daughter, sought by many prowest knights,
Both Paynim and the peers of Charlemain.
Such and so numerous was their chivalry ;
At sight whereof the Fiend yet more presumed,
And to our Saviour thus his words renewed :—

“ That thou may'st know I seek not to engage
Thy virtue, and not every way secure
On no slight grounds thy safety, hear and mark
To what end I have brought thee hither, and show 350
All this fair sight. Thy kingdom, though foretold
By Prophet or by Angel, unless thou
Endeavour, as thy father David did,
Thou never shalt obtain : prediction still
In all things, and all men, supposes means ;
Without means used, what it predicts revokes.
But say thou wert possessed of David's throne
By free consent of all, none opposite,
Samaritan or Jew ; how couldst thou hope
Long to enjoy it quiet and secure 360
Between two such enclosing enemies,
Roman and Parthian ? Therefore one of these
Thou must make sure thy own : the Parthian first,
By my advice, as nearer, and of late
Found able by invasion to annoy
Thy country, and captive lead away her kings,
Antigonus and old Hyrcanus, bound,
Maugre the Roman. It shall be my task
To render thee the Parthian at dispose,
Choose which thou wilt, by conquest or by league. 370
By him thou shalt regain, without him not,

That which alone can truly reinstall thee
In David's royal seat, his true successor—
Deliverance of thy brethren, those Ten Tribes
Whose offspring in his territory yet serve
In Habor, and among the Medes dispersed :
Ten sons of Jacob, two of Joseph, lost,
Thus long from Israel, serving, as of old
Their fathers in the land of Egypt served,
This offer sets before thee to deliver. 380
These if from servitude thou shalt restore
To their inheritance, then, nor till then,
Thou on the throne of David in full glory,
From Egypt to Euphrates and beyond,
Shalt reign, and Rome or Cæsar not need fear."

To whom our Saviour answered thus, unmoved :—
" Much ostentation vain of fleshly arm
And fragile arms, much instrument of war,
Long in preparing, soon to nothing brought,
Before mine eyes thou hast set, and in my ear 390
Vented much policy, and projects deep
Of enemies, of aids, battles, and leagues,
Plausible to the world, to me worth naught.
Means I must use, thou say'st ; prediction else
Will unpredict, and fail me of the throne !
My time, I told thee (and that time for thee
Were better farthest off), is not yet come.
When that comes, think not thou to find me
slack

On my part aught endeavouring, or to need
Thy politic maxims, or that cumbersome 400
Luggage of war there shown me—argument
Of human weakness rather than of strength.
My brethren, as thou call'st them, those Ten
Tribes,
I must deliver, if I mean to reign

David's true heir, and his full sceptre sway
To just extent over all Israel's sons!
But whence to *thee* this zeal? Where was it
then

For Israel, or for David, or his throne,
When thou stood'st up his tempter to the pride
Of numbering Israël—which cost the lives 410
Of threescore and ten thousand Israelites
By three days' pestilence? Such was thy zeal
To Israel then, the same that now to me.
As for those captive tribes, themselves were they
Who wrought their own captivity, fell off
From God to worship calves, the deities
Of Egypt, Baal next and Ashtaroth,
And all the idolatries of heathen round,
Besides their other worse than heathenish crimes;
Nor in the land of their captivity 420
Humbled themselves, or penitent besought
The God of their forefathers, but so died
Impenitent, and left a race behind
Like to themselves, distinguishable scarce
From Gentiles, but by circumcision vain,
And God with idols in their worship joined.
Should I of these the liberty regard,
Who, freed, as to their ancient patrimony,
Unhumbled, unrepentant, unreformed,
Headlong would follow, and to their gods perhaps 430
(Of Bethel and of Dan? No; let them serve
Their enemies who serve idols with God.
Yet He at length, time to himself best known,
Remembering Abraham, by some wondrous call
May bring them back, repentant and sincere,
And at their passing cleave the Assyrian flood,
While to their native land with joy they haste,
As the Red Sea and Jordan once he cleft,

When to the Promised Land their fathers passed.
To his due time and providence I leave them ”

440

So spake Israel's true King, and to the Fiend
Made answer meet, that made void all his wiles.
So fares it when with truth falsehood contends.

THE END OF THE THIRD BOOK

PARADISE REGAINED

THE FOURTH BOOK

PERPLEXED and troubled at his bad success
The Tempter stood, nor had what to reply,
Discovered in his fraud, thrown from his hope
So oft, and the persuasive rhetoric
That sleeked his tongue, and won so much on Eve,
So little here, nay lost. But Eve was Eve ;
This far his over-match, who, self-deceived
And rash, beforehand had no better weighed
The strength he was to cope with, or his own.
But—as a man who had been matchless held 10
In cunning, over-reached where least he thought,
To salve his credit, and for very spite,
Still will be tempting him who foils him still,
And never cease, though to his shame the more ;
Or as a swarm of flies in vintage-time,
About the wine-press where sweet must is poured,
Beat off, returns as oft with humming sound ;
Or surging waves against a solid rock,
Though all to shivers dashed, the assault renew,
(Vain battery !) and in froth or bubbles end— 20
So Satan, whom repulse upon repulse
Met ever, and to shameful silence brought,
Yet gives not o'er, though desperate of success,

And his vain importunity pursues.
He brought our Saviour to the western side
Of that high mountain, whence he might behold
Another plain, long, but in breadth not wide,
Washed by the southern sea, and on the north
To equal length backed with a ridge of hills
That screened the fruits of the earth and seats of men 30
From cold Septentrion blasts ; thence in the midst
Divided by a river, off whose banks
On each side an imperial city stood,
With towers and temples proudly elevate
On seven small hills, with palaces adorned,
Porches and theatres, baths, aqueducts,
Statues and trophies, and triumphal arcs,
Gardens and groves, presented to his eyes
Above the highth of mountains interposed—
By what strange parallax, or optic skill 40
Of vision, multiplied through air, or glass
Of telescope, were curious to inquire.
And now the Tempter thus his silence broke : - -

“ The city which thou seest no other deem
Than great and glorious Rome, Queen of the Earth
So far renowned, and with the spoils enriched
Of nations. There the Capitol thou seest,
Above the rest lifting his stately head
On the Tarpeian rock, her citadel
Impregnable ; and there Mount Palatine, 50
The imperial palace, compass huge, and high
The structure, skill of noblest architects,
With gilded battlements, conspicuous far,
Turrets, and terraces, and glittering spires.
Many a fair edifice besides, more like
Houses of gods—so well I have disposed
My aery microscope—thou may'st behold,
Outside and inside both, pillars and roofs

Carved work, the hand of famed artificers
In cedar, marble, ivory, or gold. 60
Thence to the gates cast round thine eye, and see
What conflux issuing forth, or entering in :
Prætors, proconsuls to their provinces
Hasting, or on return, in robes of state ;
Lictors and rods, the ensigns of their power ;
Legions and cohorts, turms of horse and wings ;
Or embassies from regions far remote,
In various habits, on the Appian road,
Or on the Æmilian—some from farthest south,
Syene, and where the shadow both way falls, 70
Merôë, Nilotic isle, and, more to west,
The realm of Bocchus to the Blackmoor sea ;
From the Asian kings (and Parthian among these),
From India and the Golden Chersoness,
And utmost Indian isle Taprobane,
Dusk faces with white silken turbants wreathed ;
From Gallia, Gades, and the British west ;
Germans, and Scythians, and Sarmatians north
Beyond Danubius to the Tauric pool.
All nations now to Rome obedience pay— 80
To Rome's great Emperor, whose wide domain,
In ample territory, wealth and power,
Civility of manners, arts and arms,
And long renown, thou justly may'st prefer
Before the Parthian. These two thrones except,
The rest are barbarous, and scarce worth the sight,
Shared among petty kings too far removed ;
These having shown thee, I have shown thee all
The kingdoms of the world, and all their glory.
This Emperor hath no son, and now is old, 90
Old and lascivious, and from Rome retired
To Caprea, an island small but strong
On the Campanian shore, with purpose there

His horrid lusts in private to enjoy ;
Committing to a wicked favourite
All public cares, and yet of him suspicious ;
Hated of all, and hating. With what ease,
Endued with regal virtues as thou art,
Appearing, and beginning noble deeds,
Might'st thou expel this monster from his throne, 100
Now made a sty, and, in his place ascending,
A victor-people free from servile yoke !
And with my help thou may'st ; to me the power
Is given, and by that right I give it thee.
Aim, therefore, at no less than all the world ;
Aim at the highest ; without the highest attained,
Will be for thee no sitting, or not long,
On David's throne, be prophesied what will."

To whom the Son of God, unmoved, replied :—
"Nor doth this grandeur and majestic show 110
Of luxury, though called magnificence,
More than of arms before, allure mine eye,
Much less my mind ; though thou should'st add to tell
Their sumptuous gluttonies, and gorgeous feasts
On citron tables or Atlantic stone
(For I have also heard, perhaps have read),
Their wines of Setia, Cales, and Falerne,
Chios and Crete, and how they quaff in gold,
Crystal, and myrrhine cups, embossed with gems
And studs of pearl—to me should'st tell, who thirst 120
And hunger still. Then embassies thou show'st
From nations far and nigh ! What honour that,
But tedious waste of time, to sit and hear
So many hollow compliments and lies,
Outlandish flatteries ? Then proceed'st to talk
Of the Emperor, how easily subdued,
How gloriously. I shall, thou say'st, expel
A brutish monster : what if I withal

Expel a Devil who first made him such ?
Let his tormentor, Conscience, find him out ; 130
For him I was not sent, nor yet to free
That people, victor once, now vile and base,
Deservedly made vassal—who, once just,
Frugal, and mild, and temperate, conquered well,
But govern ill the nations under yoke,
Peeling their provinces, exhausted all
By lust and rapine ; first ambitious grown
Of triumph, that insulting vanity ;
Then cruel, by their sports to blood inured
Of fighting beasts, and men to beasts exposed ; 140
Luxurious by their wealth, and greedier still,
And from the daily scene effeminate.
What wise and valiant man would seek to free
These, thus degenerate, by themselves enslaved,
Or could of inward slaves make outward free ?
Know, therefore, when my season comes to sit
On David's throne, it shall be like a tree
Spreading and overshadowing all the earth,
Or as a stone that shall to pieces dash
All monarchies besides throughout the world ; 150
And of my kingdom there shall be no end.
Means there shall be to this ; but what the means
Is not for thee to know, nor me to tell."

To whom the Tempter, impudent, replied :—
" I see all offers made by me how slight
Thou valuest, because offered, and reject'st.
Nothing will please the difficult and nice,
Or nothing more than still to contradict.
On the other side know also thou that I
On what I offer set as high esteem, 160
Nor what I part with mean to give for naught.
All these, which in a moment thou behold'st,
The kingdoms of the world, to thee I give

(For, given to me, I give to whom I please),
No trifle ; yet with this reserve, not else—
On this condition, if thou wilt fall down,
And worship me as thy superior lord
(Easily done), and hold them all of me ;
For what can less so great a gift deserve ?”

Whom thus our Saviour answered with disdain :— 170
“ I never liked thy talk, thy offers less ;
Now both abhor, since thou hast dared to utter
The abominable terms, impious condition.
But I endure the time, till which expired
Thou hast permission on me. It is written,
The first of all commandments, ‘ Thou shalt worship
The Lord thy God, and only Him shalt serve ’ ;
And dar’st thou to the Son of God propound
To worship thee, accursed ? now more accursed
For this attempt, bolder than that on Eve, 180
And more blasphemous ; which expect to rue.
The kingdoms of the world to thee were given !
Permitted rather, and by thee usurped ;
Other donation none thou canst produce.
If given, by whom but by the King of kings,
God over all supreme ? If given to thee,
By thee how fairly is the Giver now
Repaid ! But gratitude in thee is lost
Long since. Wert thou so void of fear or shame
As offer them to me, the Son of God— 190
To me my own, on such abhorred pact,
That I fall down and worship thee as God ?
Get thee behind me ! Plain thou now appear’st
That Evil One, Satan for ever damned.”

To whom the Fiend, with fear abashed, replied :—
“ Be not so sore offended, Son of God
Though Sons of God both Angels are and Men-
If I, to try whether in higher sort

Than these thou bear'st that title, have proposed
What both from Men and Angels I receive, 200
Tetrarchs of Fire, Air, Flood, and on the Earth
Nations besides from all the quartered winds—
God of this World invoked, and World beneath.
Who then thou art, whose coming is foretold
To me most fatal, me it most concerns.
The trial hath indamaged thee no way,
Rather more honour left and more esteem ;
Me naught advantaged, missing what I aimed.
Therefore let pass, as they are transitory,
The kingdoms of this world ; I shall no more 210
Advise thee ; gain them as thou canst, or not.
And thou thyself seem'st otherwise inclined
Than to a worldly crown, addicted more
To contemplation and profound dispute ;
As by that early action may be judged,
When, slipping from thy mother's eye, thou went'st
Alone into the Temple, there wast found
Among the gravest Rabbies, disputant
On points and questions fitting Moses' chair,
Teaching, not taught. The childhood shows the man, 220
As morning shows the day. Be famous, then,
By wisdom ; as thy empire must extend,
So let extend thy mind o'er all the world
In knowledge ; all things in it comprehend.
All knowledge is not couched in Moses' law,
The Pentateuch, or what the Prophets wrote ;
The Gentiles also know, and write, and teach
To admiration, led by Nature's light ;
And with the Gentiles much thou must converse,
Ruling them by persuasion, as thou mean'st. 230
Without their learning, how wilt thou with them,
Or they with thee, hold conversation meet ?
How wilt thou reason with them, how refute

Their idolisms, traditions, paradoxes ?
Error by his own arms is best evinced.
Look once more, ere we leave this specular mount,
Westward, much nearer by south-west ; behold
Where on the Ægean shore a city stands,
Built nobly, pure the air and light the soil—
Athens, the eye of Greece, mother of arts 240
And eloquence, native to famous wits
Or hospitable, in her sweet recess,
City or suburban, studious walks and shades.
See there the olive-grove of Academe,
Plato's retirement, where the Attic bird
Trills her thick-warbled notes the summer long ;
There, flowery hill, Hymettus, with the sound
Of bees' industrious murmur, oft invites
To studious musing ; there Ilissus rolls
His whispering stream. Within the walls then view 250
The schools of ancient sages—his who bred
Great Alexander to subdue the world,
Lyceum there ; and painted Stoa next.
There thou shalt hear and learn the secret power
Of harmony, in tones and numbers hit
By voice or hand, and various-measured verse,
Æolian charms and Dorian lyric odes,
And his who gave them breath, but higher sung,
Blind Melesigenes, thence Homer called,
Whose poem Phœbus challenged for his own. 260
Thence what the lofty grave Tragedians taught
In chorus or iambic, teachers best
Of moral prudence, with delight received
In brief sententious precepts, while they treat
Of fate, and chance, and change in human life,
High actions and high passions best describing.
Thence to the famous Orators repair,
Those ancient whose resistless eloquence

Wielded at will that fierce democracy,
Shook the Arsenal, and fulmined over Greece 270
To Macedon and Artaxerxes' throne.
To sage Philosophy next lend thine ear,
From heaven descended to the low-roofed house
Of Socrates—see there his tenement—
Whom, well inspired, the oracle pronounced
Wisest of men ; from whose mouth issued forth
Mellifluous streams, that watered all the schools
Of Academics old and new, with those
Surnamed Peripatetics, and the sect
Epicurean, and the Stoic severe. 280
These here revolve, or, as thou likest, at home,
Till time mature thee to a kingdom's weight ;
These rules will render thee a king complete
Within thyself, much more with empire joined."

To whom our Saviour sagely thus replied :—
"Think not but that I know these things ; or, think
I know them not, not therefore am I short
Of knowing what I ought. He who receives
Light from above, from the Fountain of Light,
No other doctrine needs, though granted true ; 290
But these are false, or little else but dreams,
Conjectures, fancies, built on nothing firm.
The first and wisest of them all professed
To know this only, that he nothing knew ;
The next to fabling fell and smooth conceits ;
A third sort doubted all things, though plain sense ;
Others in virtue placed felicity,
But virtue joined with riches and long life ;
In corporal pleasure he, and careless ease ;
The Stoic last in philosophic pride, 300
By him called virtue, and his virtuous man,
Wise, perfect in himself, and all possessing,
Equal to God, oft shames not to prefer,

As fearing God nor man, contemning all
Wealth, pleasure, pain or torment, death and life—
Which, when he lists, he leaves, or boasts he can,
For all his tedious talk is but vain boast,
Or subtle shifts conviction to evade.
Alas! what can they teach, and not mislead,
Ignorant of themselves, of God much more, 310
And how the World began, and how Man fell,
Degraded by himself, on grace depending?
Much of the Soul they talk, but all awry;
And in themselves seek virtue; and to themselves
All glory arrogate, to God give none;
Rather accuse him under usual names,
Fortune and Fate, as one regardless quite
Of mortal things. Who, therefore, seeks in these
True wisdom finds her not, or, by delusion
Far worse, her false resemblance only meets, 320
An empty cloud. However, many books,
Wise men have said, are wearisome; who reads
Incessantly, and to his reading brings not
A spirit and judgment equal or superior
(And what he brings what needs he elsewhere seek?).
Uncertain and unsettled still remains,
Deep-versed in books and shallow in himself,
Crude or intoxicate, collecting toys
And trifles for choice matters, worth a sponge,
As children gathering pebbles on the shore. 330
Or, if I would delight my private hours
With music or with poem, where so soon
As in our native language can I find
That solace? All our Law and Story strewed
With hymns, our Psalms with artful terms inscribed,
Our Hebrew songs and harps, in Babylon
That pleased so well our victor's ear, declare
That rather Greece from us these arts derived -

Ill imitated while they loudest sing
The vices of their deities, and their own, 340
In fable, hymn, or song, so personating
Their gods ridiculous, and themselves past shame.
Remove their swelling epithets, thick-laid
As varnish on a harlot's cheek, the rest,
Thin-sown with aught of profit or delight,
Will far be found unworthy to compare
With Sion's songs, to all true tastes excelling,
Where God is praised aright and godlike men,
The Holiest of Holies and his Saints
(Such are from God inspired, not such from thee) ; 350
Unless where moral virtue is expressed
By light of Nature, not in all quite lost.
Their orators thou then extoll'st as those
The top of eloquence—statists indeed,
And lovers of their country, as may seem ;
But herein to our Prophets far beneath,
As men divinely taught, and better teaching
The solid rules of civil government,
In their majestic, unaffected style,
Than all the oratory of Greece and Rome. 360
In them is plainest taught, and easiest learnt,
What makes a nation happy, and keeps it so,
What ruins kingdoms, and lays cities flat ;
These only, with our Law, best form a king."

So spake the Son of God ; but Satan, now
Quite at a loss (for all his darts were spent),
Thus to our Saviour, with stern brow, replied : —

" Since neither wealth nor honour, arms nor arts,
Kingdom nor empire, pleases thee, nor aught
By me proposed in life contemplative 370
Or active, tended on by glory or fame,
What dost thou in this world ? The Wilderness
For thee is fittest place : I found thee there,

And thither will return thee Yet remember
 What I foretell thee ; soon thou shalt have cause
 To wish thou never hadst rejected, thus
 Nicely or cautiously, my offered aid ;
 Which would have set thee in short time with ease
 On David's throne, or throne of all the world,
 Now at full age, fulness of time, thy season, 380
 When prophecies of thee are best fulfilled.
 Now, contrary—if I read aught in heaven,
 Or heaven write aught of fate—by what the stars
 Voluminous, or single characters
 In their conjunction met, give me to spell,
 Sorrows and labours, opposition, hate,
 Attends thee ; scorns, reproaches, injuries,
 Violence and stripes, and, lastly, cruel death.
 A kingdom they portend thee, but what kingdom,
 Real or allegoric, I discern not ; 390
 Nor when : eternal sure—as without end,
 Without beginning : for no date prefixed
 Directs me in the starry rubric set."

So saying, he took (for still he knew his power
 Not yet expired), and to the Wilderness
 Brought back, the Son of God, and left him there,
 Feigning to disappear. Darkness now rose,
 As daylight sunk, and brought in louring Night,
 Her shadowy offspring, unsubstantial both,
 Privation mere of light and absent day. 400
 Our Saviour, meek, and with untroubled mind
 After his aery jaunt, though hurried sore,
 Hungry and cold, betook him to his rest,
 Wherever, under some concourse of shades,
 Whose branching arms thick intertwined night shield
 From dews and damps of night his sheltered head ;
 But, sheltered, slept in vain ; for at his head
 The Tempter watched, and soon with ugly dreams

Disturbed his sleep. And either tropic now
'Gan thunder, and both ends of heaven ; the clouds 410
From many a horrid rift abortive poured
Fierce rain with lightning mixed, water with fire
In ruin reconciled ; nor slept the winds
Within their stony caves, but rushed abroad
From the four hinges of the world, and fell
On the vexed wilderness, whose tallest pines,
Though rooted deep as high, and sturdiest oaks,
Bowed their stiff necks, loaden with stormy blasts,
Or torn up sheer. Ill wast thou shrouded then,
O patient Son of God, yet only stood'st 420
Unshaken ! Nor yet staid the terror there :
Infernal ghosts and hellish furies round
Environed thee ; some howled, some yelled, some
 shrieked,
Some bent at thee their fiery darts, while thou
Sat'st unappalled in calm and sinless peace.
Thus passed the night so foul, till Morning fair
Came forth with pilgrim steps, in amice gray ;
Who with her radiant finger stilled the roar
Of thunder, chased the clouds, and laid the winds,
And grisly spectres, which the Fiend had raised 430
To tempt the Son of God with terrors dire.
And now the sun with more effectual beams
Had cheered the face of earth, and dried the wet
From drooping plant, or dropping tree ; the birds,
Who all things now behold more fresh and green,
After a night of storm so ruinous,
Cleared up their choicest notes in bush and spray,
'To gratulate the sweet return of morn.
Nor yet, amidst this joy and brightest morn,
Was absent, after all his mischief done, 440
The Prince of Darkness ; glad would also seem
Of this fair change, and to our Saviour came ;

Yet with no new device (they all were spent)—
Rather by this his last affront resolved,
Desperate of better course, to vent his rage
And mad despite to be so oft repelled.
Him walking on a sunny hill he found,
Backed on the north and west by a thick wood ,
Out of the wood he starts in wonted shape,
And in a careless mood thus to him said :— 150
“ Fair morning yet betides thee, Son of God.
After a dismal night. I heard the wrack,
As earth and sky would mingle ; but myself
Was distant ; and these flaws, though mortals fear them,
As dangerous to the pillared frame of Heaven.
Or to the Earth's dark basis underneath,
Are to the main as inconsiderable
And harmless, if not wholesome, as a sneeze
To man's less universe, and soon are gone.
Yet, as being oftentimes noxious where they light 160
On man, beast, plant, wasteful and turbulent,
Like turbulencies in the affairs of men,
Over whose heads they roar, and seem to point,
They oft fore-signify and threaten ill.
This tempest at this desert most was bent ;
Of men at thee, for only thou here dwell'st.
Did I not tell thee, if thou didst reject
The perfect season offered with my aid
To win thy destined seat, but wilt prolong
All to the push of fate, pursue thy way 170
Of gaining David's throne no man knows when
(For both the when and how is nowhere told),
Thou shalt be what thou art ordained, no doubt ,
For Angels have proclaimed it, but concealing
The time and means ? Each act is rightliest done
Not when it must, but when it may be best.
If thou observe not this, be sure to find

What I foretold thee—many a hard assay
Of dangers, and adversities, and pains,
Ere thou of Israel's sceptre get fast hold ; 480
Whereof this ominous night that closed thee round,
So many terrors, voices, prodigies,
May warn thee, as a sure foregoing sign."

So talked he, while the Son of God went on,
And staid not, but in brief him answered thus:—

"Me worse than wet thou find'st not ; other harm
Those terrors which thou speak'st of did me none.
I never feared they could, though noising loud
And threatening nigh : what they can do as signs
Betokening or ill-boding I contemn 490
As false portents, not sent from God, but thee ;
Who, knowing I shall reign past thy preventing,
Obtrud'st thy offered aid, that I, accepting,
At least might seem to hold all power of thee,
Ambitious Spirit ! and would'st be thought my God
And storm'st, refused, thinking to terrify
Me to thy will ! Desist (thou art discerned,
And toil'st in vain), nor me in vain molest."

To whom the Fiend, now swoln with rage, replied:—
"Then hear, O Son of David, virgin-born ! 500
For Son of God to me is yet in doubt.
Of the Messiah I have heard foretold
By all the Prophets ; of thy birth, at length
Announced by Gabriel, with the first I knew,
And of the angelic song in Bethlehem field,
On thy birth-night, that sung thee Saviour born.
From that time seldom have I ceased to eye
Thy infancy, thy childhood, and thy youth,
Thy manhood last, though yet in private bred ;
Till, at the ford of Jordan, whither all 510
Flocked to the Baptist, I among the rest
(Though not to be baptized) by voice from Heaven

Heard thee pronounced the Son of God beloved.
Thenceforth I thought thee worth my nearer view
And narrower scrutiny, that I might learn
In what degree or meaning thou art called
The Son of God, which bears no single sense.
The Son of God I also am, or was ;
And, if I was, I am ; relation stands .
All men are Sons of God ; yet thee I thought 520
In some respect far higher so declared.
Therefore I watched thy footsteps from that hour,
And followed thee still on to this waste wild,
Where, by all best conjectures, I collect
Thou art to be my fatal enemy.
Good reason, then, if I beforehand seek
To understand my adversary, who
And what he is ; his wisdom, power, intent ;
By parle or composition, truce or league,
To win him, or win from him what I can. 530
And opportunity I here have had
To try thee, sift thee, and confess have found thee
Proof against all temptation, as a rock
Of adamant and as a centre, firm
To the utmost of mere man both wise and good,
Not more ; for honours, riches, kingdoms, glory,
Have been before contemned, and may again.
Therefore, to know what more thou art than man,
Worth naming; Son of God by voice from Heaven,
Another method I must now begin." 540

So saying, he caught him up, and, without wing
Of hippogrif, bore through the air sublime,
Over the wilderness and o'er the plain,
Till underneath them fair Jerusalem,
The Holy City, lifted high her towers,
And higher yet the glorious Temple reared
Her pile, far off appearing like a mount

Of alabaster, topt with golden spires :
There, on the highest pinnacle, he set
The Son of God, and added thus in scorn :— 550

“ There stand, if thou wilt stand ; to stand upright
Will ask thee skill. I to thy Father’s house
Have brought thee, and highest placed : highest is best.
Now show thy progeny ; if not to stand,
Cast thyself down. Safely, if Son of God ,
For it is written, ‘ He will give command
Concerning thee to his Angels ; in their hands
They shall uplift thee, lest at any time
Thou chance to dash thy foot against a stone.’ ”

To whom thus Jesus : “ Also it is written, 560
‘ Tempt not the Lord thy God.’ ” He said, and stood ;
But Satan, smitten with amazement, fell.

As when Earth’s son, Antæus (to compare
Small things with greatest), in Irassa strove
With Jove’s Alcides, and, oft foiled, still rose,
Receiving from his mother Earth new strength,
Fresh from his fall, and fiercer grapple joined,
Throttled at length in the air expired and fell,
So, after many a foil, the Tempter proud,
Renewing fresh assaults, amidst his pride 570
Fell whence he stood to see his victor fall ;
And, as that Theban monster that proposed
Her riddle, and him who solved it not devoured,
That once found out and solved, for grief and spite
Cast herself headlong from the Ismenian steep,
So, strook with dread and anguish, fell the Fiend,
And to his crew, that sat consulting, brought
Joyless triumphals of his hoped success,
Ruin, and desperation, and dismay,
Who durst so proudly tempt the Son of God. 580
So Satan fell ; and straight a fiery globe
Of Angels on full sail of wing flew nigh,

Who on their plummy vans received Him soft
From his uneasy station, and upbore,
As on a floating couch, through the blithe air ;
Then, in a flowery valley, set him down
On a green bank, and set before him spread
A table of celestial food, divine
Ambrosial fruits fetched from the Tree of Life,
And from the Fount of Life ambrosial drink, 590
That soon refreshed him wearied, and repaired
What hunger, if aught hunger, had impaired.
Or thirst ; and, as he fed, Angelic quires
Sung heavenly anthems of his victory
Over temptation and the Tempter proud :—

“ True Image of the Father, whether throned
In the bosom of bliss, and light of light
Conceiving, or, remote from Heaven, enshrined
In fleshly tabernacle and human form,
Wandering the wilderness—whatever place, 600
Habit, or state, or motion, still expressing
The Son of God, with Godlike force endued
Against the attempter of thy Father's throne
And thief of Paradise ! Him long of old
Thou didst debase, and down from Heaven cast
With all his army ; now thou hast avenged
Supplanted Adam, and, by vanquishing
Temptation, hast regained lost Paradise,
And frustrated the conquest fraudulent
He never more henceforth will dare set foot 610
In Paradise to tempt ; his snares are broke.
For, though that seat of earthly bliss be failed,
A fairer Paradise is founded now
For Adam and his chosen sons, whom thou,
A Saviour, art come down to reinstall ;
Where they shall dwell secure, when time shall be,
Of tempter and temptation without fear.

But thou, Infernal Serpent ! shalt not long
Rule in the clouds. Like an autumnal star,
Or lightning, thou shalt fall from Heaven, trod
down

620

Under his feet. For proof, ere this thou feel'st
Thy wound (yet not thy last and deadliest wound)
By this repulse received, and hold'st in Hell
No triumph ; in all her gates Abaddon rues
Thy bold attempt. Hereafter learn with awe
To dread the Son of God. He, all unarmed,
Shall chase thee, with the terror of his voice,
From thy demoniac holds, possession foul—
Thee and thy legions ; yelling they shall fly,
And beg to hide them in a herd of swine,
Lest he command them down into the Deep,
Bound, and to torment sent before their time.
Hail, Son of the Most High, heir of both Worlds,
Queller of Satan ! On thy glorious work
Now enter, and begin to save Mankind."

630

Thus they the Son of God, our Saviour meek,
Sung victor, and, from heavenly feast refreshed,
Brought on his way with joy He, unobserved,
Home to his mother's house private returned.

SAMSON AGONISTES

INTRODUCTION

TO

SAMSON AGONISTES

MILTON is remembered mainly as an epic poet. But his final choice of the epic form for his greatest poem and its companion was the result of deliberation. Apparently it was even a departure from his original inclination, when in his early manhood he had debated with himself in what form of poetry his genius would have fullest scope. Two of his early English poems had not only been dramatic, but had actually been performed. The *Arcades* was "part of an entertainment presented to the Countess-Dowager of Derby at Harefield by some noble persons of her family," probably in the year 1633; and *Comus*, the finest and most extensive of all Milton's minor poems, was nothing else than an elaborate "masque," performed, in the year 1634, at Ludlow Castle, in Shropshire, before the Earl of Bridgewater, Lord President of Wales, by way of an entertainment to the gentry of the neighbourhood. (See Introductions to these two Poems.) Whether Milton was present at the performance of either the *Arcades* or the *Comus* is not known; but the fact of his having written two such dramatic pieces for actual performance by the members of a family with which he had relations of acquaintance shows that at that time,—*i.e.* when he was twenty-six years of age,—he had no objection to this kind of entertainment, then so fashionable at Court and among noble families of literary tastes. That he had seen masques performed,—masques of Ben Jonson, Carew, and Shirley,—may be taken for granted; and we have his own assurance that, when at Cambridge, he attended dramatic representations

there, got up in the colleges, and that, when in London, during his vacations from Cambridge, he used to go to the theatres (*Eleg.* i. 29-46). To the same effect we have his lines in *L'Allegro*, where he includes the theatre among the natural pleasures of the mind in its cheerful mood—

“ Then to the well-trod stage anon,
If Jonson's learned sock be on,
Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
Warble his native wood-notes wild ” —

words which, so far as Milton's appreciation of Shakespeare is concerned, would be rather disappointing, if we did not recollect the splendid lines which he had previously written (1630), and which were prefixed to the second folio edition of Shakespeare's Plays in 1632,—

“ What needs my Shakespeare for his honoured bones
The labour of an age in pill'd stones,
Or that his hallowed reliques should be hid
Under a star-ypointing pyramid?
Dear Son of Memory, great heir of Fame,
What need'st thou such weak witness,” etc.

Still the unlawfulness of dramatic entertainments had always been a tenet of those stricter English Puritans with whom Milton even then felt a political sympathy; and Prynne's famous *Histriomastix*, in which he denounced stage-plays and all connected with them through a thousand quarto pages (1632), had helped to confirm Puritanism in this tenet. As Prynne's treatise had been out more than a year before the *Arcades* and *Comus* were written, it is clear that he had not converted Milton to his opinion. While the more rigid and less educated of the Puritans undoubtedly went with Prynne in condemning the stage altogether, Milton, I should say, before the time of his journey to Italy (1638-39), was one of those who retained a pride in the Drama as the form of literature in which, for two generations, English genius had been most productive. Lamenting, with others, the corrupt condition into which the National Drama had fallen in baser hands, and the immoral accompaniments of the degraded stage, he had seen no reason to recant his enthusiastic tribute to the memory of Shakespeare, or to be ashamed of his own private contributions to the dramatic literature of England.

Gradually, however, with Milton's growing seriousness amid the events and duties that awaited him after his return from his Italian journey, and especially after the meeting of the Long Parliament (Nov. 3, 1640), there seems to have been a change in his notions on this subject. From this period it seems likely that his sympathy with the Prynne view of the Drama, at least as far as regarded the English stage, was more considerable than it had been. There is proof, at all events, that, while he regarded all literature as recently infected with corruption, and requiring to be taught again its true relation to the spiritual needs and uses of a great nation, he felt an especial contempt for the popular literature of stage-plays, as then written and acted. With that feeling, if I mistake not, he was practically against theatre-going, as unworthy of a serious man at a time when there was such a contrast between what was to be seen within the theatres and what was in course of transaction outside of them; nor, if his two masques and his eulogy on Shakespeare had remained to be written, am I sure that he would have judged them opportune then. Probably he would not now have written masques for actual performance, public or private. And yet he had not abandoned his admiration of the drama as a form of literature. On the contrary, he was still convinced that no form of literature was nobler, more capable of conveying the highest and most salutary conceptions of the mind of a great poet. When, immediately after his return from Italy, he was preparing himself for that great English poem upon which he proposed to bestow his full strength, and debating with himself as to its subject and its form, what do we find? We find him, for a while (*The Reason of Church Government*, Introd. to Book II.) balancing the claims of the epic, the dramatic, and the lyric, and concluding that in any one of these a great Christian poet might have congenial scope and the benefit of grand precedents and models. He discusses the claims of the epic first, and thinks highly of them, but proceeds immediately to inquire "whether those *dramatic* constitutions in which Sophocles and Euripides reign "shall be found more doctrinal and exemplary to a nation"; adding, "The Scripture also affords us a divine Pastoral Drama in the Song "of Solomon, consisting of two persons and a double chorus, as "Origen rightly judges; and the Apocalypse of St. John is the "majestic image of a high and stately Tragedy, shutting up and

"intermingling her solemn scenes and acts with a sevenfold chorus
 "of hallelujahs and harping symphonies; and this my opinion the
 "grave authority of Paræus, commenting that book, is sufficient to
 "confirm." Here we have certainly evidence that no amount of
 sympathy which Milton may have felt with the Puritan dislike
 of stage-plays had affected his admiration of the dramatic form of
 poetry as practised by the ancient Greek tragedians and others.
 Accordingly, it was to the dramatic form, rather than to either the
 epic or the lyric, that Milton then inclined in his meditations of
 some great English poem to be written by himself. As we have
 already seen (Introduction to *Paradise Lost*, pp. 43-47), he threw
 aside his first notion of an epic on King Arthur, and began to
 collect possible subjects for dramas from Scriptural History, and
 from the early history of Britain. He collected and jotted down
 the titles of no fewer than sixty possible tragedies on subjects from
 the Old and New Testaments, and thirty-eight possible tragedies
 on subjects of English and Scottish History,—among which latter,
 strangely enough, was one on the subject of *Macbeth*. From this
 extraordinary collection of possible subjects *Paradise Lost* already
 stood out as that which most fascinated him; but even that subject
 was to be treated dramatically.

All this was before the year 1642. On the 2d of September in
 that year,—the King having a few days before raised his standard
 at Nottingham, and so given the signal for the Civil War, there
 was passed the famous ordinance of Parliament suppressing stage-
 plays "while the public troubles last," and shutting up the London
 theatres. From that date onwards to close on the Restoration, or for
 nearly eighteen years, the Drama, in the sense of the Acted Drama,
 was in abeyance in England. This fact may have co-operated with
 other reasons in determining Milton, when he did at length find
 leisure for returning to his scheme of a great English poem, to
 abandon the dramatic form previously contemplated. True, the
 mere discontinuance of stage-plays in England, as an amusement
 inconsistent with Puritan ideas, and intolerable in the state of the
 times, cannot, even though Milton approved of such discontinuance
 (as he doubtless did), have altered his former convictions in favour
 of the dramatic form of poetry, according to its noblest ancient
 models, especially as he could have had no thought, when meditat-
 ing his Scriptural Tragedies, of adapting them for actual performance.

Such a tragedy as *he* had meant to write would not have been the least in conflict with the real operative element in the contemporary Puritan antipathy to the Drama. Still the dramatic form itself had fallen into discredit; and there were weaker brethren with whom it would have been useless to reason on the distinction between the Written Drama and the Acted Drama, between the noblest tragedy on the ancient Greek plan and the worst of those English stage-plays of the reign of Charles from which the nation had been compelled to desist. Milton does not seem to have been indifferent to this feeling. The tone of his well-known reference to Shakespeare in his *Εἰκονοκλαστής*, published in 1649,—where Shakespeare is mentioned and quoted as the favourite poet of Charles I.,—suggests that, if he had not then really abated his allegiance to Shakespeare (and only by a gross misconstruction of the passage could there be *that* inference), he at least agreed so far with the ordinary Puritanism around him as not to think Shakespeare-worship the particular public doctrine then required by the English mind.

For some such reason, among others, Milton, when he set himself at length (1658) to redeem his long-given pledge of a great English poem, and chose for his subject *Paradise Lost*, deliberately gave up his first intention of treating that subject dramatically. When that poem was given to the world (1667) it was as an epic. Its successor, *Paradise Regained*, published in 1671, was also an epic.

But, though it was thus as an epic poet that Milton chose mainly and finally to appear before the world, he was so far faithful to his old affection for the Drama as to leave to the world one experiment of his mature art in that form. *Samson Agonistes* was an attestation that the poet who in his earlier years had written the beautiful pastoral drama of *Comus* had never ceased to like that form of poesy, but to the last believed it suitable, with modifications, for his severer and sterner purposes. At what time *Samson* was written is not definitely ascertained; but it was certainly after the Restoration, and probably after 1667. It was published in 1671, in the same volume with *Paradise Regained* (see title of the volume, etc. in *Introd. to Paradise Regained*, p. 492). For a time the connexion thus established between *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes* was kept up in subsequent editions; but since 1688 I know of no publication of these two poems together by themselves. There

have been editions of the *Samson* by itself; but it has generally appeared either in collective editions of all the poems, or in editions of the Minor Poems apart from *Paradise Lost*.

How came Milton to select such a subject as that of *Samson Agonistes* for one of his latest poems, if not the very latest?

To this question it is partly an answer to say that the exploits of the Hebrew Samson had long before struck him as capable of treatment in an English tragedy. Among his jottings, in 1640-41, of subjects for possible Scripture Tragedies, we find these two, occurring as the 19th and 20th in the total list,—“*Samson Pursofphorus or Hybristes, or Samson Marrying, or Ramath-Lechi*” (Judges xv.), and “*Dagonalia*” (Judges xvi.) That is to say, Milton, in 1640-41, thought there might be two sacred dramas founded on the accounts of Samson’s life in the Book of Judges: one on Samson’s first marriage with a Philistian woman, and his feuds with the Philistines growing out of that incident, when he was *Pursofphorus* (i.e. The Firebrand-bringer) or *Hybristes* (i.e. Violent); the other on the closing scene of Samson’s life, when he took his final vengeance on the Philistines at their feast to Dagon. These subjects, however, do not seem then to have had such attractions for Milton as some of the others in his list; for they are merely jotted down as above, whereas to some of the others, such as “*Dinah*,” “*Abram from Morea*,” and “*Sodom*,” are appended sketches of the plot or hints for the treatment. Why, then, did Milton, in his later life, neglect so many other subjects of which he had kept his early notes, and select so confidently the story of Samson?

The reason is not far to seek; nor need we seek it in the fact that he had seen Italian, Latin, and even English, poems on the story of Samson, which may have reminded him of the theme. Todd and other commentators have dug up the titles of some such old poems, Latin, Italian, English, and what not, without being able to show that they suggested anything to Milton. More workmanlike, and of more precise interest, is the attempt in Mr. Edmundson’s recent little volume entitled *Milton and Vondel* to prove that Milton, —whom he supposes, as we have already seen, to have been so largely indebted to the contemporary Dutch poet Vondel for help in his *Paradise Lost* and his *Paradise Regained*,—availed himself also of the same assistance in his *Samson Agonistes*. Vondel, it seems,

had published, in 1660, eleven years before the appearance of Milton's tragedy, a Dutch drama on the same subject, consisting of a dialogue in rhyming Dutch Alexandrines, with interspersed lyric choruses; and Mr. Edmundson devotes a special chapter of his ingenious little book to an account of this *Samson* of Vondel, and to specimens of those parallelisms between it and Milton's later *Samson* which demonstrate, as he thinks, Milton's continued furtive use, in this last poetical work of his no less than in his two epics, of the prior writings of his eminent Dutch contemporary. Now, of this particular chapter in Mr. Edmundson's book it may certainly be said that it is an interesting addition to our knowledge of Vondel, and worth reading on that account. Perhaps also it leaves a stronger impression of some acquaintance by Milton with Vondel's *Samson*, before he dictated his own *Samson Agonistes*, than Mr. Edmundson, with all his ingenuity, has been able to convey of Milton's possible acquaintance with Vondel in any other case. There, however, the interest stops. All Mr. Edmundson's deductions beyond that point are naught, just as are all his deductions from his Vondelian parallelisms with *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*,—vitiated as they are by that strange propensity which seems to attend every prolonged exercise of the wretched industry of parallelism-hunting, and doubly vitiated in this case by the facile adoption of the monstrous idea that a genius like Milton's ever did, or ever could, build itself, or any of its creations, on gathered scraps and petty pickings and stealings. Had Vondel never lived, we should have had Milton's *Samson Agonistes* all the same.

The real truth is that the capabilities of the theme, perceived, by Milton through mere poetic tact as early as 1640-41, had been brought home to him, with singular force and intimacy, by the experience of his own subsequent life. The story of Samson must have seemed to Milton a metaphor or allegory of much of his own life in its later stages. He also, in his veteran days after the Restoration, was a champion at bay, a prophet-warrior left alone among men of a different faith and different manners,—Philistines, who exulted in the ruin of his cause, and wreaked their wrath upon him for his past services to that cause by insults, calumnies, and jeers at his misfortunes and the cause itself. He also was blind, as Samson had been,—groping about among the malignant conditions that had befallen him, helplessly dependent on the guiding of others, and

bereft of the external consolations and means of resistance to his scornors that might have come to him through sight. He also had to live mainly in the imagery of the past. In that past, too, there were similarities in his case to that of Samson. Like Samson, substantially, he had been a Nazarite,—no drinker of wine or strong drink, but one who had always been even ascetic in his dedicated service to great designs. And the chief blunder in his life, that which had gone nearest to wreck it, and had left the most marring consequences and the most painful reflections, was the very blunder of which, twice-repeated, Samson had to accuse himself. Like Samson, he had married a Philistine woman,—one not of his own tribe, and having no thoughts or interests in common with his own; and, like Samson, he had suffered indignities from this wife and her relations, till he had learnt to rue the match. The effects of Milton's unhappy first marriage (1643) on his temper and opinions are discernible in his biography far beyond their apparent end in the publication of his *Divorce Pamphlets*, followed by his hasty reconciliation with his wife after her two years' desertion of him (1645). Although, from that time, he lived with his first wife, without further audible complaint, till her death in 1652, and although his two subsequent marriages were happier, the recollection of his first marriage (and it was only the wife of this first marriage that he had ever *seen*) seems always to have dwelt in Milton's mind, and to have influenced his thoughts of the marriage institution itself, and of the ways and character of women. In this respect also he could find coincidences between his own life and that of Samson, which recommended the story of Samson with far more poignancy to him in his later life than when he had first looked at it in the inexperience of his early manhood. In short, there must have rushed upon Milton, when he contemplated in his later life the story of the blind Samson among the Philistines, so many similarities with his own case that there need be little wonder that he then selected this subject for poetic treatment. While writing *Samson Agonistes* (i.e. Samson the Agonist, Athlete, or Wrestler) he must have been secretly conscious throughout that he was representing much of his own feelings and experience; and the reader of the poem that knows anything of Milton's life has this pressed upon him at every turn. Probably the best introduction to the poem would be to read the Biblical history of Samson (*Judges* xiii.-xvi.) with the facts of Milton's life in one's mind.

The poem was put forth, however, with no intimation to this effect. That, indeed, might have been an obstacle to its passing the censorship. Readers were left to gather the facts for themselves, according to the degree of their information, and their quickness in interpreting. In the prose preface which Milton thought fit to prefix to the poem,—entitled "*Of that sort of Dramatic Poem which is called Tragedy*,"—he concerns himself not at all with the matter of the poem, or his own meaning in it, but only with its literary form. He explains why, towards the grave close of his life, he has not thought it inconsistent to write what might be called a Tragedy, and what particular kind of Tragedy he has thought it worth while to write. The preface ought to be read in connexion with the remarks already made here on Milton's early taste for the dramatic form of poetry, and on the variations which that taste had undergone in the subsequent course of his life.

A large portion of the preface is apologetic. Although, after the Restoration, the Drama had revived in England, and people were once more familiar with theatres and stage-plays, Milton evidently felt that many of his countrymen still retained their Puritanic horror of the Drama, and that this horror might well have been increased by the spectacle of such plays as had been supplied to the re-opened theatres by Davenant, Dryden, Killigrew, Wycherley, and the other caterers for the amusement of Charles II. and his Court. An explanation might be demanded why when the Drama was thus, in the eyes of many, a greater abomination than ever, a man like Milton should give his countenance in any way to the dramatic form of poetry. Accordingly, Milton does explain this, and in such a way as to distinguish as widely as possible between the tragedy he had written and the stage-dramas then popular. "Tragedy, as it was anciently composed," he says, "hath been ever held the gravest, moralest, and most profitable of all other poems." To fortify this statement, he repeats Aristotle's definition of Tragedy, and reminds his readers that "philosophers and other gravest writers" had frequently quoted from the old tragic poets, nay, that St. Paul himself had quoted a verse of Euripides, and that, according to the judgment of a Protestant commentator on the Apocalypse, that book of the Biblical canon might be viewed as a tragedy of peculiar structure, with choruses between the acts. Some of the most eminent and active men in history, he adds, one of the Fathers of the Christian

Church included, had written or attempted tragedies. All this, he says, is "mentioned to vindicate Tragedy from the small esteem, or "rather infamy, which in the account of many it undergoes at this "day, with other common interludes; happening through the poet's "error of intermixing comic stuff with tragic sadness and gravity, or "introducing trivial and vulgar persons; which by all judicious hath "been counted absurd, and brought in without discretion, corruptly "to gratify the people." It is impossible not to see, in the carefulness of this apology, that Milton felt that he was treading on perilous ground, and might give offence to the weaker brethren by his use of the dramatic form at all, especially for a sacred subject. It is hardly possible, either, to avoid seeing, in the reference to the "error of intermixing comic stuff with tragic sadness and gravity," an allusion to Shakespeare himself, as well as to Dryden and the other post-Restoration dramatists.

Samson Agonistes, therefore, was offered to the world as a tragedy avowedly of a different order from that which had been established in England. It was a tragedy of the severe classic order, according to that noble Greek model which had been kept up by none of the modern nations, unless it might be the Italians. In reading it, not Shakespeare, nor Ben Jonson, nor Massinger, must be thought of, but Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Claiming this in general terms, the poet calls especial attention to his fidelity to ancient Greek precedents in two particulars,—his use of the chorus, and his observation of the rule of unity in time. The tragedy, he says, never having been intended for the stage, but only to be read, the division into acts and scenes is omitted. He does *not* say, however (and this is worth noting), that, had it been possible to produce the tragedy on the stage in a becoming manner, he would have objected to the experiment. It is said that Bishop Atterbury, about 1722, had a scheme for bringing Milton's *Samson* on the stage at Westminster, the division into acts and names to be arranged by Pope. It was a finer compliment when Handel, in 1742, made *Samson* the subject of an Oratorio, and married his great music to Milton's words.

SAMSON AGONISTES:

A DRAMATIC POEM

THE AUTHOR

JOHN MILTON

Aristot. Poet. cap. 6. Τραγωδία μέλῃσις πράξεως σπουδαίας, etc. — Tragoedia est imitatio actionis serie, etc., per misericordiam et metum perficiens talium affectuum lustrationem.

OF THAT SORT OF DRAMATIC POEM CALLED TRAGEDY

TRAGEDY, as it was anciently composed, hath been ever held the gravest, moralest, and most profitable of all other poems; therefore said by Aristotle to be of power, by raising pity and fear, or terror, to purge the mind of those and such-like passions,—that is, to temper and reduce them to just measure with a kind of delight, stirred up by reading or seeing those passions well imitated. Nor is Nature wanting in her own effects to make good his assertion; for so, in physic, things of melancholic hue and quality are used against melancholy, sour against sour, salt to remove salt humours. Hence philosophers and other gravest writers, as Cicero, Plutarch, and others, frequently cite out of tragic poets, both to adorn and illustrate their discourse. The Apostle Paul himself thought it not unworthy to insert a verse of Euripides into the text of Holy Scripture, 1 Cor. xv. 33; and Pareus, commenting on the *Revelation*, divides the whole book, as a tragedy, into acts, distinguished each by a chorus of heavenly harpings and song between. Heretofore men in highest dignity have laboured not a little to be thought able to compose a tragedy. Of that honour Dionysius the elder was no less ambitious than before of his attaining to the tyranny. Augustus Cæsar also had begun his *Ajax*, but, unable to please his own judgment with what he had begun, left it unfinished. Seneca, the philosopher, is by some thought the author of those tragedies (at least the best of them) that go under that name. Gregory Nazianzen, a Father of the Church, thought it not unbeseeming the sanctity of his person to write a tragedy, which he entitled *Christ Suffering*. This is mentioned to vindicate Tragedy from the small esteem, or rather infamy, which

in the account of many it undergoes at this day, with other common interludes ; happening through the poet's error of intermixing comic stuff with tragic sadness and gravity, or introducing trivial and vulgar persons : which by all judicious hath been counted absurd, and brought in without discretion, corruptly to gratify the people. And, though ancient Tragedy use no Prologue, yet using sometimes, in case of self-defence or explanation, that which Martial calls an Epistle, in behalf of this tragedy, coming forth after the ancient manner, much different from what among us passes for best, thus much beforehand may be *epistled*,—that Chorus is here introduced after the Greek manner, not ancient only, but modern, and still in use among the Italians. In the modelling therefore of this poem, with good reason, the Ancients and Italians are rather followed, as of much more authority and fame. The measure of verse used in the Chorus is of all sorts, called by the Greeks *Monostrophic*, or rather *Apolelymenon*, without regard had to Strophe, Antistrophe, or Epode, —which were a kind of stanzas framed only for the music, then used with the Chorus that sung ; not essential to the poem, and therefore not material : or, being divided into stanzas or pauses, they may be called *Allæostrophæ*. Division into act and scene, referring chiefly to the stage (to which this work never was intended), is here omitted.

It suffices if the whole drama be found not produced beyond the fifth act. Of the style and uniformity, and that commonly called the plot, whether intricate or explicit, —which is nothing indeed but such economy, or disposition of the fable, as may stand best with verisimilitude and decorum,—they only will best judge who are not unacquainted with Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, the three tragic poets unequalled yet by any, and the best rule to all who endeavour to write Tragedy. The circumscription of time, wherein the whole drama begins and ends, is, according to ancient rule and best example, within the space of twenty-four hours.

THE ARGUMENT

SAMSON, made captive, blind, and now in the prison at Gaza, there to labour as in a common workhouse, on a festival day, in the general cessation from labour, comes forth into the open air, to a place high, somewhat retired, there to sit a while and bemoan his condition. Where he happens at length to be visited by certain friends and equals of his tribe, which make the Chorus, who seek to comfort him what they can ; then by his old father, Manoa, who endeavours the like, and withal tells him his purpose to procure his liberty by ransom ; lastly, that this feast was proclaimed by the Philistines as a day of thanksgiving for their deliverance from the hands of Samson,—which yet more troubles him. Manoa then departs to prosecute his endeavour with the Philistian lords for Samson's redemption : who, in the meanwhile, is visited by other persons, and, lastly, by a public officer to require his coming to the feast before the lords and people, to play or show his strength in their presence. He at first refuses, dismissing the public officer with absolute denial to come : at length, persuaded inwardly that this was from God, he yields to go along with him, who came now the second time with great threatenings to fetch him. The Chorus yet remaining on the place, Manoa returns full of joyful hope to procure ere long his son's deliverance ; in the midst of which discourse an Elnew comes in haste, confusedly at first, and afterwards more distinctly, relating the catastrophe,—what Samson had done to the Philistines, and by accident to himself ; wherewith the Tragedy ends.

THE PERSONS

SAMSON.

MANOA, the father of Samson.

DALILA, his wife.

HARAPHIA of Gath.

Public Officer.

Messenger.

Chorus of Danites.

The Scene, before the Prison in Gaza.

SAMSON AGONISTES

SAMS. A little onward lend thy guiding hand
To these dark steps, a little further on ;
For yonder bank hath choice of sun or shade.
There I am wont to sit, when any chance
Relieves me from my task of servile toil,
Daily in the common prison else enjoined me,
Where I, a prisoner chained, scarce freely draw
The air, imprisoned also, close and damp,
Unwholesome draught. But here I feel amends—
The breath of heaven fresh blowing, pure and sweet, 10
With day-spring born ; here leave me to respire.
This day a solemn feast the people hold
To Dagon, their sea-idol, and forbid
Laborious works. Unwillingly this rest
Their superstition yields me ; hence, with leave
Retiring from the popular noise, I seek
This unfrequented place to find some ease—
Ease to the body some, none to the mind
From restless thoughts, that, like a deadly swarm
Of hornets armed, no sooner found alone
But rush upon me thronging, and present 20
Times past, what once I was, and what am now.
Oh, wherefore was my birth from Heaven foretold
Twice by an Angel, who at last, in sight
Of both my parents, all in flames ascended

From off the altar where an offering burned,
As in a fiery column charioting
His godlike presence, and from some great act
Or benefit revealed to Abraham's race?
Why was my breeding ordered and prescribed 30
As of a person separate to God,
Designed for great exploits, if I must die
Betrayed, captived, and both my eyes put out,
Made of my enemies the scorn and gaze,
To grind in brazen fetters under task
With this heaven-gifted strength? O glorious strength,
Put to the labour of a beast, debased
Lower than bond-slave! Promise was that I
Should Israel from Philistian yoke deliver!
Ask for this great deliverer now, and find him 40
Eyeless in Gaza, at the mill with slaves,
Himself in bonds under Philistian yoke.
Yet stay; let me not rashly call in doubt
Divine prediction. What if all foretold
Had been fulfilled but through mine own default?
Whom have I to complain of but myself,
Who this high gift of strength committed to me,
In what part lodged, how easily bereft me,
Under the seal of silence could not keep,
But weakly to a woman must reveal it, 50
O'ercome with importunity and tears?
O impotence of mind in body strong!
But what is strength without a double share
Of wisdom? Vast, unwieldy, burdensome,
Proudly secure, yet liable to fall
By weakest subtleties; not made to rule,
But to subserve where wisdom bears command.
God, when he gave me strength, to show withal
How slight the gift was, hung it in my hair.
But peace! I must not quarrel with the will 60

Of highest dispensation, which herein
Haply had ends above my reach to know.
Suffices that to me strength is my bane,
And proves the source of all my miseries—
So many, and so huge, that each apart
Would ask a life to wail. But, chief of all,
O loss of sight, of thee I most complain !
Blind among enemies ! O worse than chains,
Dungeon, or beggary, or decrepit age !
Light, the prime work of God, to me is extinct, 70
And all her various objects of delight
Annulled, which might in part my grief have eased.
Inferior to the vilest now become
Of man or worm, the vilest here excel me :
They creep, yet see ; I, dark in light, exposed
To daily fraud, contempt, abuse, and wrong,
Within doors, or without, still as a fool,
In power of others, never in my own—
Scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half.
O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon, 80
Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse
Without all hope of day !
O first-created beam, and thou great Word,
“ Let there be light, and light was over all,”
Why am I thus bereaved thy prime decree ?
The Sun to me is dark
And silent as the Moon
When she deserts the night,
Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.
Since light so necessary is to life, 90
And almost life itself, if it be true
That light is in the soul,
She all in every part, why was the sight
To such a tender ball as the eye confined,
So obvious and so easy to be quenched,

And not, as feeling, through all parts diffused,
 That she might look at will through every pore ?
 Then had I not been thus exiled from light,
 As in the land of darkness, yet in light,
 To live a life half dead, a living death,
 And buried ; but, O yet more miserable !
 Myself my sepulchre, a moving grave ;
 Buried, yet not exempt,
 By privilege of death and burial,
 From worst of other evils, pains, and wrongs ;
 But made hereby obnoxious more
 To all the miseries of life,
 Life in captivity
 Among inhuman foes.

100

But who are these ? for with joint pace I hear
 The tread of many feet steering this way ;
 Perhaps my enemies, who come to stare
 At my affliction, and perhaps to insult—
 Their daily practice to afflict me more.

110

Chor. This, this is he ; softly a while ;
 Let us not break in upon him.
 O change beyond report, thought, or belief !
 See how he lies at random, carelessly diffused,
 With languished head unpropt,
 As one past hope, abandoned,
 And by himself given over,
 In slavish habit, ill-fitted weeds
 O'er-worn and soiled.

120

Or do my eyes misrepresent ? Can this be he,
 That heroic, that renowned,
 Irresistible Samson ? whom, unarmed,
 No strength of man, or fiercest wild beast, could
 withstand ;
 Who tore the lion as the lion tears the kid ;
 Ran on embattled armies clad in iron,

And, weaponless himself, 130
Made arms ridiculous, useless the forgery
Of brazen shield and spear, the hammered cuirass,
Chalybean-tempered steel, and frock of mail
Adamantean proof:
But safest he who stood aloof,
When insupportably his foot advanced,
In scorn of their proud arms and warlike tools,
Spurned them to death by troops. The bold Ascalonite
Fled from his lion ramp; old warriors turned
Their plated backs under his heel, 140
Or grovelling soiled their crested helmets in the dust.
Then with what trivial weapon came to hand,
The jaw of a dead ass, his sword of bone,
A thousand foreskins fell, the flower of Palestine,
In Ramath-lechi, famous to this day:
Then by main force pulled up, and on his shoulders bore,
The gates of Azza, post and massy bar,
Up to the hill by Hebron, seat of giants old—
No journey of a sabbath-day, and loaded so—
Like whom the Gentiles feign to bear up Heaven. 150
Which shall I first bewail—
Thy bondage or lost sight,
Prison within prison
Inseparably dark?
Thou art become (O worst imprisonment!)
The dungeon of thyself; thy soul
(Which men enjoying sight oft without cause complain)
Imprisoned now indeed,
In real darkness of the body dwells,
Shut up from outward light 160
To incorporate with gloomy night;
For inward light, alas!
Puts forth no visual beam.
(O mirror of our fickle state,

Since man on earth unparalleled,
 The rarer thy example stands,
 By how much from the top of wondrous glory,
 Strongest of mortal men,
 To lowest pitch of abject fortune thou art fallen.
 For him I reckon not in high estate 170
 Whom long descent of birth,
 Or the sphere of fortune, raises ;
 But thee, whose strength, while virtue was her mate,
 Might have subdued the Earth,
 Universally crowned with highest praises.

Sams. I hear the sound of words ; their sense the air
 Dissolves unjointed ere it reach my ear.

Chor. He speaks : let us draw nigh. Matchless in
 might,
 The glory late of Israel, now the grief !
 We come, thy friends and neighbours not unknown, 180
 From Eshtaol and Zora's fruitful vale,
 To visit or bewail thee ; or, if better,
 Counsel or consolation we may bring,
 Salve to thy sores : apt words have power to swage
 The tumours of a troubled mind,
 And are as balm to festered wounds.

Sams. Your coming, friends, revives me ; for I learn
 Now of my own experience, not by talk,
 How counterfeit a coin they are who ' friends '
 Bear in their superscription (of the most 190
 I would be understood). In prosperous days
 They swarm, but in adverse withdraw their head,
 Not to be found, though sought. Ye see, O friends,
 How many evils have enclosed me round ;
 Yet that which was the worst now least afflicts me,
 Blindness ; for, had I sight, confused with shame,
 How could I once look up, or heave the head,
 Who, like a foolish pilot, have shipwrecked

My vessel trusted to me from above,
Gloriously rigged, and for a word, a tear, 200
Fool! have divulged the secret gift of God
To a deceitful woman? Tell me, friends,
Am I not sung and proverbied for a fool
In every street? Do they not say, 'How well
Are come upon him his deserts'? Yet why?
Immeasurable strength they might behold
In me; of wisdom nothing more than mean.
This with the other should at least have paired;
These two, proportioned ill, drove me transverse.

Chor. Tax not divine disposal. Wisest men 210
Have erred, and by bad women been deceived;
And shall again, pretend they ne'er so wise.
Deject not, then, so overmuch thyself,
Who hast of sorrow thy full load besides.
Yet, truth to say, I oft have heard men wonder
Why thou should'st wed Philistian women rather
Than of thine own tribe fairer, or as fair,
At least of thy own nation, and as noble.

Sams. The first I saw at Timna, and she pleased
Me, not my parents, that I sought to wed 220
The daughter of an infidel. They knew not
That what I motioned was of God; I knew
From intimate impulse, and therefore urged
The marriage on, that, by occasion hence,
I might begin Israel's deliverance—
The work to which I was divinely called.
She proving false, the next I took to wife
(O that I never had! fond wish too late!)
Was in the vale of Sorec, Dalila,
That specious monster, my accomplished snare. 230
I thought it lawful from my former act,
And the same end, still watching to oppress
Israel's oppressors. Of what now I suffer

She was not the prime cause, but I myself,
 Who, vanquished with a peal of words, (O weakness !)
 Gave up my fort of silence to a woman.

Chor. In seeking just occasion to provoke
 The Philistine, thy country's enemy,
 Thou never wast remiss, I bear thee witness ;
 Yet Israël still serves with all his sons. 240

Sams. That fault I take not on me, but transfer
 On Israel's governors and heads of tribes,
 Who, seeing those great acts which God had done
 Singly by me against their conquerors,
 Acknowledged not, or not at all considered,
 Deliverance offered. I, on the other side,
 Used no ambition to commend my deeds ;
 The deeds themselves, though mute, spoke loud the
 doer.

But they persisted deaf, and would not seem
 To count them things worth notice, till at length 250
 Their lords, the Philistines, with gathered powers,
 Entered Judea, seeking me, who then
 Safe to the rock of Ètham was retired---
 Not flying, but forecasting in what place
 To set upon them, what advantaged best.
 Meanwhile the men of Judah, to prevent
 The harass of their land, beset me round ;
 I willingly on some conditions came
 Into their hands, and they as gladly yield me
 To the Uncircumcised a welcome prey, 260
 Bound with two cords. But cords to me were threads
 Touched with the flame : on their whole host I flew
 Unarmed, and with a trivial weapon felled
 Their choicest youth ; they only lived who fled.
 Had Judah that day joined, or one whole tribe,
 They had by this possessed the towers of Gath,
 And lorded over them whom now they serve.

But what more oft, in nations grown corrupt,
And by their vices brought to servitude,
Than to love bondage more than liberty— 270
Bondage with ease than strenuous liberty—
And to despise, or envy, or suspect,
Whom God hath of his special favour raised
As their deliverer? If he aught begin,
How frequent to desert him, and at last
To heap ingratitude on worthiest deeds!

Chor. Thy words to my remembrance bring
How Succoth and the fort of Penuel
Their great deliverer contemned,
The matchless Gideon, in pursuit 280
Of Madian, and her vanquished kings;
And how ingrateful Ephraim
Had dealt with Jephtha, who by argument,
Not worse than by his shield and spear,
Defended Israel from the Ammonite,
Had not his prowess quelled their pride
In that sore battle when so many died
Without reprieve, adjudged to death
For want of well pronouncing *Shibboleth*.

Sams. Of such examples add me to the roll. 290
Me easily indeed mine may neglect,
But God's proposed deliverance not so.

Chor. Just are the ways of God,
And justifiable to men,
Unless there be who think not God at all.
If any be, they walk obscure;
For of such doctrine never was there school
But the heart of the fool,
And no man therein doctor but himself.

Yet more there be who doubt his ways not just, 300
As to his own edicts found contradicting;
Then give the reins to wandering thought,

Regardless of his glory's diminution,
Till, by their own perplexities involved,
They ravel more, still less resolved,
But never find self-satisfying solution.

As if they would confine the Interminable,
And tie him to his own prescript,
Who made our laws to bind us, not himself,
And hath full right to exempt
Whomso it pleases him by choice
From national obstruction, without taint
Of sin, or legal debt ;
For with his own laws he can best dispense.

He would not else, who never wanted means,
Nor in respect of the enemy just cause,
To set his people free,
Have prompted this heroic Nazarite,
Against his vow of strictest purity,
To seek in marriage that fallacious bride,
Unclean, unchaste.

Down, Reason, then ; at least, vain reasonings down ;
Though Reason here aver
That moral verdict quits her of unclean :
Unchaste was subsequent ; her stain, not his.

But see ! here comes thy reverend sire,
With careful step, locks white as down,
Old Manoa : advise
Forthwith how thou ought'st to receive him.

Sams. Ay me ! another inward grief, awaked
With mention of that name, renews the assault.

Man. Brethren and men of Dan (for such ye seem,
Though in this uncouth place), if old respect,
As I suppose, towards your once gloried friend,
My son, now captive, hither hath informed
Your younger feet, while mine, cast back with age,
Came lagging after, say if he be here.

Chor. As signal now in low dejected state
As erst in highest, behold him where he lies.

Man. O miserable change! Is this the man, 340
That invincible Samson, far renowned,
The dread of Israel's foes, who with a strength
Equivalent to Angels' walked their streets,
None offering fight; who, single combatant,
Duelled their armies ranked in proud array,
Himself an army—now unequal match
To save himself against a coward armed
At one spear's length? O ever-failing trust
In mortal strength! and, oh, what not in man
Deceivable and vain? Nay, what thing good 350
Prayed for, but often proves our woe, our bane?
I prayed for children, and thought barrenness
In wedlock a reproach; I gained a son,
And such a son as all men hailed me happy.
Who would be now a father in my stead?
Oh, wherefore did God grant me my request,
And as a blessing with such pomp adorned?
Why are his gifts desirable, to tempt
Our earnest prayers,—then, given with solemn hand
As graces, draw a scorpion's tail behind? 360
For this did the Angel twice descend? for this
Ordained thy nurture holy, as of a plant
Select and sacred? glorious for a while,
The miracle of men; then in an hour
Ensnared, assaulted, overcome, led bound,
Thy foes' derision, captive, poor and blind,
Into a dungeon thrust, to work with slaves!
Alas! methinks whom God hath chosen once
To worthiest deeds, if he through frailty err,
He should not so o'erwhelm, and as a thrall 370
Subject him to so foul indignities,
Be it but for honour's sake of former deeds.

Sams. Appoint not heavenly disposition, father.
Nothing of all these evils hath befallen me
But justly ; I myself have brought them on ;
Sole author I, sole cause. If aught seem vile,
As vile hath been my folly, who have profaned
The mystery of God, given me under pledge
Of vow, and have betrayed it to a woman,
A Canaanite, my faithless enemy. 380
This well I knew, nor was at all surprised,
But warned by oft experience. Did not she
Of Timna first betray me, and reveal
The secret wrested from me in her highth
Of nuptial love professed, carrying it straight
To them who had corrupted her, my spies
And rivals ? In this other was there found
More faith, who, also in her prime of love,
Spousal embraces, vitiated with gold,
Though offered only, by the scent conceived, 390
Her spurious first-born, Treason against me ?
Thrice she assayed, with flattering prayers and sighs
And amorous reproaches, to win from me
My capital secret, in what part my strength
Lay stored, in what part summed, that she might know ;
Thrice I deluded her, and turned to sport
Her importunity, each time perceiving
How openly and with what impudence
She purposed to betray me, and (which was worse
Than undissembled hate) with what contempt 400
She sought to make me traitor to myself.
Yet, the fourth time, when, mustering all her wiles,
With blandished parleys, feminine assaults,
Tongue-batteries, she surceased not day nor night
To storm me, over-watched and wearied out,
At times when men seek most repose and rest,
I yielded, and unlocked her all my heart,

Who, with a grain of manhood well resolved,
Might easily have shook off all her snares ;
But foul effeminacy held me yoked 410
Her bond-slave. O indignity, O blot
To honour and religion ! servile mind
Rewarded well with servile punishment !
The base degree to which I now am fallen,
These rags, this grinding, is not yet so base
As was my former servitude, ignoble,
Unmanly, ignominious, infamous,
True slavery ; and that blindness worse than this,
That saw not how degenerately I served.

Man. I cannot praise thy marriage-choices, son— 420
Rather approved them not ; but thou didst plead
Divine impulsion prompting how thou might'st
Find some occasion to infest our foes.
I state not that ; this I am sure—our foes
Found soon occasion thereby to make thee
Their captive, and their triumph ; thou the sooner
Temptation found'st, or over-potent charms,
To violate the sacred trust of silence
Deposited within thee—which to have kept
Tacit was in thy power. True ; and thou bear'st 430
Enough, and more, the burden of that fault ;
Bitterly hast thou paid, and still art paying,
That rigid score. A worse thing yet remains :
This day the Philistines a popular feast
Here celebrate in Gaza, and proclaim
Great pomp, and sacrifice, and praises loud,
To Dagon, as their god who hath delivered
Thee, Samson, bound and blind, into their hands—
Them out of thine, who slew'st them many a slain.
So Dagon shall be magnified, and God, 440
Besides whom is no god, compared with idols,
Disglorified, blasphemed, and had in scorn

By the idolatrous rout amidst their wine ;
 Which to have come to pass by means of thee,
 Samson, of all thy sufferings think the heaviest,
 Of all reproach the most with shame that ever
 Could have befallen thee and thy father's house.

Sams. Father, I do acknowledge and confess
 That I this honour, I this pomp, have brought
 To Dagon, and advanced his praises high 450
 Among the Heathen round—to God have brought
 Dishonour, obloquy, and oped the mouths
 Of idolists and atheists ; have brought scandal
 To Israel, diffidence of God, and doubt
 In feeble hearts, propense enough before
 To waver, or fall off and join with idols :
 Which is my chief affliction, shame and sorrow,
 The anguish of my soul, that suffers not
 Mine eye to harbour sleep, or thoughts to rest.
 This only hope relieves me, that the strife 460
 With me hath end. All the contest is now
 'Twixt God and Dagon. Dagon hath presumed,
 Me overthrown, to enter lists with God,
 His deity comparing and preferring
 Before the God of Abraham. He, be sure,
 Will not connive, or linger, thus provoked,
 But will arise, and his great name assert.
 Dagon must stoop, and shall ere long receive
 Such a discomfit as shall quite despoil him
 Of all these boasted trophies won on me, 470
 And with confusion blank his worshipers.

Man. With cause this hope relieves thee ; and
 these words
 I as a prophecy receive ; for God
 (Nothing more certain) will not long defer
 To vindicate the glory of his name
 Against all competition, nor will long

Endure it doubtful whether God be Lord
Or Dagon. But for thee what shall be done ?
Thou must not in the meanwhile, here forgot,
Lie in this miserable loathsome plight 480
Neglected. I already have made way
To some Philistian lords, with whom to treat
About thy ransom. Well they may by this
Have satisfied their utmost of revenge,
By pains and slaveries, worse than death, inflicted
On thee, who now no more canst do them harm.

Sams. Spare that proposal, father ; spare the trouble
Of that solicitation. Let me here,
As I deserve, pay on my punishment,
And expiate, if possible, my crime, 490
Shameful garrulity. To have revealed
Secrets of *men*, the secrets of a friend,
How heinous had the fact been, how deserving
Contempt and scorn of all—to be excluded
All friendship, and avoided as a blab,
The mark of fool set on his front !
But I *God's* counsel have not kept, his holy secret
Presumptuously have published, impiously,
Weakly at least and shamefully—a sin
That Gentiles in their parables condemn 500
To their Abyss and horrid pains confined.

Man. Be penitent, and for thy fault contrite ;
But act not in thy own affliction, son.
Repent the sin ; but, if the punishment
Thou canst avoid, self-preservation bids ;
Or the execution leave to high disposal,
And let another hand, not thine, exact
Thy penal forfeit from thyself. Perhaps
God will relent, and quit thee all his debt ;
Who ever more approves and more accepts 510
(Best pleased with humble and filial submission)

Him who, imploring mercy, sues for life,
 Than who, self-rigorous, chooses death as due ;
 Which argues over-just, and self-displeased
 For self-offence more than for God offended.
 Reject not, then, what offered means who knows
 But God hath set before us to return thee
 Home to thy country and his sacred house,
 Where thou may'st bring thy offerings, to avert
 His further ire, with prayers and vows renewed. 520

Sams. His pardon I implore ; but, as for life,
 To what end should I seek it? When in strength
 All mortals I excelled, and, great in hopes,
 With youthful courage, and magnanimous thoughts
 Of birth from Heaven foretold and high exploits,
 Full of divine instinct, after some proof
 Of acts indeed heroic, far beyond
 The sons of Anak, famous now and blazed,
 Fearless of danger, like a petty god
 I walked about, admired of all, and dreaded 530
 On hostile ground, none daring my affront—
 Then, swollen with pride, into the snare I fell
 Of fair fallacious looks, venereal trains,
 Softened with pleasure and voluptuous life,
 At length to lay my head and hallowed pledge
 Of all my strength in the lascivious lap
 Of a deceitful concubine, who shore me,
 Like a tame wether, all my precious fleece,
 Then turned me out ridiculous, despoiled,
 Shaven, and disarmed among my enemies. 540

Chor. Desire of wine and all delicious drinks,
 Which many a famous warrior overturns,
 Thou could'st repress ; nor did the dancing ruby,
 Sparkling out-poured, the flavour or the smell,
 Or taste, that cheers the heart of gods and men,
 Allure thee from the cool crystalline stream.

Sams. Wherever fountain or fresh current flowed
Against the eastern ray, translucent, pure
With touch ethereal of Heaven's fiery rod,
I drank, from the clear milky juice allaying 550
Thirst, and refreshed ; nor envied them the grape
Whose heads that turbulent liquor fills with fumes.

Chor. O madness ! to think use of strongest wines
And strongest drinks our chief support of health,
When God with these forbidden made choice to rear
His mighty champion, strong above compare,
Whose drink was only from the liquid brook !

Sams. But what availed this temperance, not
complete
Against another object more enticing ?
What boots it at one gate to make defence, 560
And at another to let in the foe,
Effeminately vanquished ? by which means,
Now blind, disheartened, shamed, dishonoured, quelled,
To what can I be useful ? wherein serve
My nation, and the work from Heaven imposed ?
But to sit idle on the household hearth,
A burdenous drone ; to visitants a gaze,
Or pitied object ; these redundant locks,
Robustious to no purpose, clustering down,
Vain monument of strength ; till length of years 570
And sedentary numbness craze my limbs
To a contemptible old age obscure.
Here rather let me drudge, and earn my bread,
Till vermin, or the draff of servile food,
Consume me, and oft-invoked death
Hasten the welcome end of all my pains.

Man. Wilt thou then serve the Philistines with
that gift
Which was expressly given thee to annoy them ?
Better at home lie bed-rid, not only idle,

Inglorious, unemployed, with age outworn. 580
 But God, who caused a fountain at thy prayer
 From the dry ground to spring, thy thirst to allay
 After the brunt of battle, can as easy
 Cause light again within thy eyes to spring,
 Wherewith to serve him better than thou hast.
 And I persuade me so. Why else this strength
 Miraculous yet remaining in those locks ?
 His might continues in thee not for naught,
 Nor shall his wondrous gifts be frustrate thus.

Sams. All otherwise to me my thoughts por-
 tend— 590

That these dark orbs no more shall treat with light,
 Nor the other light of life continue long,
 But yield to double darkness nigh at hand ;
 So much I feel my genial spirits droop,
 My hopes all flat : Nature within me seems
 In all her functions weary of herself ;
 My race of glory run, and race of shame,
 And I shall shortly be with them that rest.

Man. Believe not these suggestions, which proceed
 From anguish of the mind, and humours black 600
 That mingle with thy fancy. I, however,
 Must not omit a father's timely care
 To prosecute the means of thy deliverance
 By ransom or how else : meanwhile be calm,
 And healing words from these thy friends admit.

Sams. Oh, that torment should not be confined
 To the body's wounds and sores,
 With maladies innumerable
 In heart, head, breast, and reins,
 But must secret passage find 610
 To the inmost mind,
 There exercise all his fierce accidents,
 And on her purest spirits prey,

As on entrails, joints, and limbs,
With answerable pains, but more intense,
Though void of corporal sense !

My griefs not only pain me
As a lingering disease,
But, finding no redress, ferment and rage ;
Nor less than wounds immedicable
Rankle, and fester, and gangrene,
To black mortification.

620

Thoughts, my tormentors, armed with deadly stings,
Mangle my apprehensive tenderest parts,
Exasperate, exulcerate, and raise
Dire inflammation, which no cooling herb
Or medicinal liquor can assuage,
Nor breath of vernal air from snowy Alp.
Sleep hath forsook and given me o'er
To death's benumbing opium as my only cure ;
Thence faintings, swoonings of despair,
And sense of Heaven's desertion.

630

I was His nursling once and choice delight,
His destined from the womb,
Promised by heavenly message twice descending.
Under his special eye
Abstemious I grew up and thrived amain ;
He led me on to mightiest deeds,
Above the nerve of mortal arm,
Against the Uncircumcised, our enemies :
But now hath cast me off as never known,
And to those cruel enemies,
Whom I by his appointment had provoked,
Left me all helpless, with the irreparable loss
Of sight, reserved alive to be repeated
The subject of their cruelty or scorn
Nor am I in the list of them that hope ;
Hopeless are all my evils, all remediless.

640

This one prayer yet remains, might I be heard,
 No long petition—speedy death, 650
 The close of all my miseries and the balm.

Chor. Many are the sayings of the wise,
 In ancient and in modern books enrolled,
 Extolling patience as the truest fortitude,
 And to the bearing well of all calamities,
 All chances incident to man's frail life,
 Consolatories writ
 With studied argument, and much persuasion sought,
 Lenient of grief and anxious thought.
 But with the afflicted in his pangs their sound 660
 Little prevails, or rather seems a tune
 Harsh, and of dissonant mood from his complaint,
 Unless he feel within
 Some source of consolation from above,
 Secret refreshings that repair his strength
 And fainting spirits uphold.

God of our fathers! what is Man,
 That thou towards him with hand so various—
 Or might I say contrarious?—
 Temper'st thy providence through his short course : 670
 Not evenly, as thou rul'st
 The angelic orders, and inferior creatures mute
 Irrational and brute?
 Nor do I name of men the common rout,
 That, wandering loose about,
 Grow up and perish as the summer fly,
 Heads without name, no more remembered ;
 But such as thou hast solemnly elected,
 With gifts and graces eminently adorned,
 To some great work, thy glory, 680
 And people's safety, which in part they effect.
 Yet toward these, thus dignified, thou oft,
 Amidst their highth of noon,

Changest thy countenance and thy hand, with no regard
Of highest favours past

From thee on them, or them to thee of service.

Nor only dost degrade them, or remit
To life obscured, which were a fair dismissal,
But throw'st them lower than thou didst exalt them
high—

Unseemly falls in human eye, 690

Too grievous for the trespass or omission ;

Oft leav'st them to the hostile sword

Of heathen and profane, their carcasses

To dogs and fowls a prey, or else captived,

Or to the unjust tribunals, under change of times,

And condemnation of the ungrateful multitude.

If these they scape, perhaps in poverty

With sickness and disease thou bow'st them down,

Painful diseases and deformed,

In crude old age ; 700

Though not disordinate, yet causeless suffering

The punishment of dissolute days. In fine,

Just or unjust alike seem miserable,

For oft alike both come to evil end.

So deal not with this once thy glorious champion,

The image of thy strength, and mighty minister.

What do I beg ? how hast thou dealt already !

Behold him in this state calamitous, and turn

His labours, for thou canst, to peaceful end.

But who is this ? what thing of sea or land -- 710

Female of sex it seems—

That, so bedecked, ornate, and gay,

Comes this way sailing,

Like a stately ship

Of Tarsus, bound for the isles

Of Javan or Gadire,

With all her bravery on, and tackle trim,

Sails filled, and streamers waving,
 Courted by all the winds that hold them play ;
 An amber scent of odorous perfume 720
 Her harbinger, a damsel train behind ?
 Some rich Philistian matron she may seem ;
 And now, at nearer view, no other certain
 Than Dalila thy wife.

Sams. My wife ! my traitress ! let her not come
 near me.

Chor. Yet on she moves ; now stands and eyes thee
 fixed,
 About to have spoke ; but now, with head declined,
 Like a fair flower surcharged with dew, she weeps,
 And words addressed seem into tears dissolved,
 Wetting the borders of her silken veil. 730
 But now again she makes address to speak.

Dal. With doubtful feet and wavering resolution
 I came, still dreading thy displeasure, Samson ;
 Which to have merited, without excuse,
 I cannot but acknowledge. Yet, if tears
 May expiate (though the fact more evil drew
 In the perverse event than I foresaw),
 My penance hath not slackened, though my pardon
 No way assured. But conjugal affection,
 Prevailing over fear and timorous doubt, 740
 Hath led me on, desirous to behold
 Once more thy face, and know of thy estate,
 If aught in my ability may serve
 To lighten what thou suffer'st, and appease
 Thy mind with what amends is in my power—
 Though late, yet in some part to recompense
 My rash but more unfortunate misdeed.

Sams. Out, out, hyæna ! These are thy wonted arts,
 And arts of every woman false like thee—
 To break all faith, all vows, deceive, betray ; 750

Then, as repentant, to submit, beseech,
And reconciliation move with feigned remorse,
Confess, and promise wonders in her change—
Not truly penitent, but chief to try
Her husband, how far urged his patience bears,
His virtue or weakness which way to assail :
Then, with more cautious and instructed skill,
Again transgresses, and again submits ;
That wisest and best men, full oft beguiled,
With goodness principled not to reject 760
The penitent, but ever to forgive,
Are drawn to wear out miserable days,
Entangled with a poisonous bosom-snake,
If not by quick destruction soon cut off,
As I by thee, to ages an example.

Dal. Yet hear me, Samson ; not that I endeavour
To lessen or extenuate my offence,
But that, on the other side, if it be weighed
By itself, with aggravations not surcharged,
Or else with just allowance counterpoised, 770
I may, if possible, thy pardon find
The easier towards me, or thy hatred less.
First granting, as I do, it was a weakness
In me, but incident to all our sex,
Curiosity, inquisitive, importune
Of secrets, then with like infirmity
To publish them—both common female faults—
Was it not weakness also to make known
For importunity, that is for naught,
Wherein consisted all thy strength and safety ? 780
To what I did thou show'dst me first the way.
But I to enemies revealed, and should not !
Nor should'st thou have trusted that to woman's frailty :
Ere I to thee, thou to thyself wast cruel.
Let weakness, then, with weakness come to parle,

So near related, or the same of kind ;
 Thine forgive mine, that men may censure thine
 The gentler, if severely thou exact not
 More strength from me than in thyself was found.
 And what if love, which thou interpret'st hate, 790
 The jealousy of love, powerful of sway
 In human hearts, nor less in mine towards thee,
 Caused what I did ? I saw thee mutable
 Of fancy ; feared lest one day thou would'st leave me
 As her at Timna ; sought by all means, therefore,
 How to endear, and hold thee to me firmest :
 No better way I saw than by importuning
 To learn thy secrets, get into my power
 Thy key of strength and safety. Thou wilt say,
 ' Why, then, revealed ? ' I was assured by those 800
 Who tempted me that nothing was designed
 Against thee but safe custody and hold.
 That made for me ; I knew that liberty
 Would draw thee forth to perilous enterprises,
 While I at home sat full of cares and fears,
 Wailing thy absence in my widowed bed ;
 Here I should still enjoy thee, day and night,
 Mine and love's prisoner, not the Philistines',
 Whole to myself, unhazarded abroad,
 Fearless at home of partners in my love. 810
 These reasons in Love's law have passed for good,
 Though fond and reasonless to some perhaps ;
 And love hath oft, well meaning, wrought much woe,
 Yet always pity or pardon hath obtained.
 Be not unlike all others, not austere
 As thou art strong, inflexible as steel.
 If thou in strength all mortals dost exceed,
 In uncompassionate anger do not so.

Sams. How cunningly the sorceress displays
 Her own transgressions, to upbraid me mine ! 820

That malice, not repentance, brought thee hither
By this appears. I gave, thou say'st, the example ;
I led the way : bitter reproach, but true ;
I to myself was false ere thou to me.
Such pardon, therefore, as I give my folly
Take to thy wicked deed ; which when thou scest
Impartial, self-severe, inexorable,
Thou wilt renounce thy seeking, and much rather
Confess it feigned. Weakness is thy excuse,
And I believe it—weakness to resist 830
Philistian gold. If weakness may excuse,
What murderer, what traitor, parricide,
Incestuous, sacrilegious, but may plead it ?
All wickedness is weakness ; that plea, therefore,
With God or man will gain thee no remission.
But love constrained thee ! Call it furious rage
To satisfy thy lust. Love seeks to have love ;
My love how could'st thou hope, who took'st the way
'To raise in me inexpiable hate,
Knowing, as needs I must, by thee betrayed ? 840
In vain thou striv'st to cover shame with shame,
Or by evasions thy crime uncover'st more.

Dal. Since thou determin'st weakness for no plea
In man or woman, though to thy own condemning,
Hear what assaults I had, what snares besides,
What sieges girt me round, ere I consented ;
Which might have awed the best-resolved of men,
The constantest, to have yielded without blame.
It was not gold, as to my charge thou lay'st,
That wrought with me. Thou know'st the magistrates
And princes of my country came in person, 851
Solicited, cominanded, threatened, urged,
Adjured by all the bonds of civil duty
And of religion—pressed how just it was,
How honourable, how glorious, to entrap

A common enemy, who had destroyed
Such numbers of our nation : and the priest
Was not behind, but ever at my ear,
Preaching how meritorious with the gods
It would be to ensnare an irreligious 860
Dishonourer of Dagon. What had I
To oppose against such powerful arguments?
Only my love of thee held long debate,
And combated in silence all these reasons
With hard contest. At length, that grounded maxim,
So rife and celebrated in the mouths
Of wisest men, that to the public good
Private respects must yield, with grave authority
Took full possession of me, and prevailed ;
Virtue, as I thought, truth, duty, so enjoining. 870

Sams. I thought where all thy circling wiles would
end—

In feigned religion, smooth hypocrisy !
But, had thy love, still odiously pretended,
Been, as it ought, sincere, it would have taught thee
Far other reasonings, brought forth other deeds.
I, before all the daughters of my tribe
And of my nation, chose thee from among
My enemies, loved thee, as too well thou knew'st,
Too well ; unbosomed all my secrets to thee,
Not out of levity, but overpowered 880
By thy request, who could deny thee nothing ;
Yet now am judged an enemy. Why, then,
Didst thou at first receive me for thy husband—
Then, as since then, thy country's foe professed ?
Being once a wife, for me thou wast to leave
Parents and country ; nor was I their subject,
Nor under their protection, but my own ;
Thou mine, not theirs. If aught against my life
Thy country sought of thee, it sought unjustly,

Against the law of nature, law of nations ; 890
No more thy country, but an impious crew
Of men conspiring to uphold their state
By worse than hostile deeds, violating the ends
For which our country is a name so dear ;
Not therefore to be obeyed. But zeal moved thee ;
To please thy gods thou didst it ! Gods unable
To acquit themselves and prosecute their foes
But by ungodly deeds, the contradiction
Of their own deity, Gods cannot be—
Less therefore to be pleased, obeyed, or feared. 900
These false prettexts and varnished colours failing,
Bare in thy guilt, how foul must thou appear !

Dal. In argument with men a woman ever
Goes by the worse, whatever be her cause.

Sams. For want of words, no doubt, or lack of
breath !

Witness when I was worried with thy peals.

Dal. I was a fool, too rash, and quite mistaken
In what I thought would have succeeded best.
Let me obtain forgiveness of thee, Samson ;
Afford me place to show what recompense 910
Towards thee I intend for what I have misdone,
Misguided. Only what remains past cure
Bear not too sensibly, nor still insist
To afflict thyself in vain. Though sight be lost,
Life yet hath many solaces, enjoyed
Where other senses want not their delights—
At home, in leisure and domestic ease,
Exempt from many a care and chance to which
Eyesight exposes, daily, men abroad.
I to the lords will intercede, not doubting 920
Their favourable ear, that I may fetch thee
From forth this loathsome prison-house, to abide
With me, where my redoubled love and care,

With nursing diligence, to me glad office,
May ever tend about thee to old age,
With all things grateful cheered, and so supplied
That what by me thou hast lost thou least shalt miss.

Sams. No, no ; of my condition take no care ;
It fits not ; thou and I long since are twain ;
Nor think me so unwary or accursed 930
To bring my feet again into the snare
Where once I have been caught. I know thy trains,
Though dearly to my cost, thy gins, and toils.
Thy fair enchanted cup, and warbling charms,
No more on me have power ; their force is nulled ;
So much of adder's wisdom I have learned,
To fence my ear against thy sorceries.
If in my flower of youth and strength, when all men
Loved, honoured, feared me, thou alone could hate me,
Thy husband, slight me, sell me, and forgo me, 940
How would'st thou use me now, blind, and thereby
Deceivable, in most things as a child
Helpless, thence easily contemned and scorned,
And last neglected ! How would'st thou insult,
When I must live uxorious to thy will
In perfect thralldom ! how again betray me,
Bearing my words and doings to the lords
To gloss upon, and, censuring, frown or smile !
This jail I count the house of liberty
To thine, whose doors my feet shall never enter. 950

Dal. Let me approach at least, and touch thy hand.

Sams. Not for thy life, lest fierce remembrance
wake

My sudden rage to tear thee joint by joint.
At distance I forgive thee ; go with that ;
Bewail thy falsehood, and the pious works
It hath brought forth to make thee memorable
Among illustrious women, faithful wives ;

Cherish thy hastened widowhood with the gold
Of matrimonial treason : so farewell.

Dal. I see thou art implacable, more deaf 960
To prayers than winds and seas. Yet winds to seas
Are reconciled at length, and sea to shore :
Thy anger, unappeasable, still rages,
Eternal tempest never to be calmed.
Why do I humble thus myself, and, suing
For peace, reap nothing but repulse and hate,
Bid go with evil omen, and the brand
Of infamy upon my name denounced ?
To mix with thy concernments I desist
Henceforth, nor too much disapprove my own. 970
Fame, if not double-faced, is double-mouthed,
And with contrary blast proclaims most deeds ;
On both his wings, one black, the other white,
Bears greatest names in his wild aery flight.
My name, perhaps, among the Circumcised
In Dan, in Judah, and the bordering tribes,
To all posterity may stand defamed,
With malediction mentioned, and the blot
Of falsehood most unconjugal traduced.
But in my country, where I most desire, 980
In Ecron, Gaza, Asdod, and in Gath,
I shall be named among the famousest
Of women, sung at solemn festivals,
Living and dead recorded, who, to save
Her country from a fierce destroyer, chose
Above the faith of wedlock bands ; my tomb
With odours visited and annual flowers ;
Not less renowned than in Mount Ephraim
Jael, who, with inhospitable guile,
Smote Sisera sleeping, through the temples nailed. 990
Nor shall I count it heinous to enjoy
The public marks of honour and reward

Conferred upon me for the piety
Which to my country I was judged to have shown.
At this whoever envies or repines,
I leave him to his lot, and like my own.

Chor. She's gone—a manifest serpent by her sting
Discovered in the end, till now concealed.

Sams. So let her go. God sent her to debase me,
And aggravate my folly, who committed 1000
To such a viper his most sacred trust
Of secrecy, my safety, and my life.

Chor. Yet beauty, though injurious, hath strange
power,
After offence returning, to regain
Love once possessed, nor can be easily
Repulsed, without much inward passion felt,
And secret sting of amorous remorse.

Sams. Love-quarrels oft in pleasing concord end ;
Not wedlock-treachery endangering life.

Chor. It is not virtue, wisdom, valour, wit, 1010
Strength, comeliness of shape, or amplest merit,
That woman's love can win, or long inherit ;
But what it is, hard is to say,
Harder to hit,
Which way soever men refer it,
(Much like thy riddle, Samson) in one day
Or seven though one should musing sit.

If any of these, or all, the Timnian bride
Had not so soon preferred
Thy paranymp, worthless to thee compared, 1020
Successor in thy bed,
Nor both so loosely disallied
Their nuptials, nor this last so treacherously
Had shorn the fatal harvest of thy head.
Is it for that such outward ornament
Was lavished on their sex, that inward gifts

Were left for haste unfinished, judgment scant,
Capacity not raised to apprehend
Or value what is best
In choice, but ofttest to affect the wrong? 1030
Or was too much of self-love mixed,
Of constancy no root infixed,
That either they love nothing, or not long?

Whate'er it be, to wisest men and best,
Seeming at first all heavenly under virgin veil,
Soft, modest, meek, demure,
Once joined, the contrary she proves—a thorn
Intestine, far within defensive arms
A cleaving mischief, in his way to virtue
Adverse and turbulent; or by her charms 1040
Draws him awry, enslaved
With dotage, and his sense depraved
To folly and shameful deeds, which ruin ends.
What pilot so expert but needs must wreck,
Embarked with such a steers-mate at the helm?

Favoured of Heaven who finds
One virtuous, rarely found,
That in domestic good combines!
Happy that house! his way to peace is smooth:
But virtue which breaks through all opposition, 1050
And all temptation can remove,
Most shines and most is acceptable above.

Therefore God's universal law
Gave to the man despotic power
Over his female in due awe,
Nor from that right to part an hour,
Smile she or lour:
So shall he least confusion draw
On his whole life, not swayed
By female usurpation, nor dismayed. 1060

But had we best retire? I see a storm.

Sams. Fair days have oft contracted wind and rain.

Chor. But this another kind of tempest brings.

Sams. Be less abstruse ; my riddling days are past.

Chor. Look now for no enchanting voice, nor fear
The bait of honeyed words ; a rougher tongue
Draws hitherward. I know him by his stride,
The giant Harapha of Gath, his look
Haughty, as is his pile high-built and proud
Comes he in peace ? What wind hath blown him hither
I less conjecture than when first I saw 1071
The sumptuous Dalila floating this way :
His habit carries peace, his brow defiance.

Sams. Or peace or not, alike to me he comes.

Chor. His fraught we soon shall know : he now
arrives

Har. I come not, Samson, to condole thy chance,
As these perhaps, yet wish it had not been,
Though for no friendly intent. I am of Gath ;
Men call me Harapha, of stock renowned
As Og, or Anak, and the Emims old 1080
That Kiriathaim held. Thou know'st me now,
If thou at all art known. Much I have heard
Of thy prodigious might and feats performed,
Incredible to me,—in this displeased,
That I was never present on the place
Of those encounters, where we might have tried
Each other's force in camp or listed field ;
And now am come to see of whom such noise
Hath walked about, and each limb to survey,
If thy appearance answer loud report. 1090

Sams. The way to know were not to see, but taste.

Har. Dost thou already single me ? I thought
Gyves and the mill had tamed thee. O that fortune
Had brought me to the field where thou art famed
To have wrought such wonders with an ass's jaw !

I should have forced thee soon wish other arms,
Or left thy carcass where the ass lay thrown ;
So had the glory of prowess been recovered
To Palestine, won by a Philistine
From the unforeskinned race, of whom thou bear'st 1100
The highest name for valiant acts. That honour,
Certain to have won by mortal duel from thee,
I lose, prevented by thy eyes put out.

Sams. Boast not of what thou would'st have done,
but do

What then thou would'st ; thou seest it in thy hand.

Har. To combat with a blind man I disdain,
And thou hast need much washing to be touched.

Sams. Such usage as your honourable lords
Afford me, assassinated and betrayed ;
Who durst not with their whole united powers 1110
In fight withstand me single and unarmed,
Nor in the house with chamber-ambushes
Close-banded durst attack me, no, not sleeping,
Till they had hired a woman with their gold,
Breaking her marriage-faith, to circumvent me.
Therefore, without feign'd shifts, let be assigned
Some narrow place enclosed, where sight may give thee,
Or rather flight, no great advantage on me ;
Then put on all thy gorgeous arms, thy helmet
And brigandine of brass, thy broad habergeon, 1120
Vant-brace and greaves and gauntlet ; add thy spear,
A weaver's beam, and seven-times-folded shield :
I only with an oaken staff will meet thee,
And raise such outcries on thy clattered iron,
Which long shall not withhold me from thy head,
That in a little time, while breath remains thee,
Thou oft shalt wish thyself at Gath, to boast
Again in safety what thou would'st have done
To Samson, but shalt never see Gath more.

Har. Thou durst not thus disparage glorious arms
Which greatest heroes have in battle worn, 1131
Their ornament and safety, had not spells
And black enchantments, some magician's art,
Armed thee or charmed thee strong, which thou from
Heaven

Feign'dst at thy birth was given thee in thy hair,
Where strength can least abide, though all thy hairs
Were bristles ranged like those that ridge the back
Of chafed wild boars or ruffled porcupines.

Sams. I know no spells, use no forbidden arts ;
My trust is in the Living God, who gave me, 1140
At my nativity, this strength, diffused
No less through all my sinews, joints, and bones,
Than thine, while I preserved these locks unshorn,
The pledge of my unviolated vow.
For proof hereof, if Dagon be thy god,
Go to his temple, invoke his aid
With solemnest devotion, spread before him
How highly it concerns his glory now
To frustrate and dissolve these magic spells,
Which I to be the power of Israel's God 1150
Avow, and challenge Dagon to the test,
Offering to combat thee, his champion bold,
With the utmost of his godhead seconded :
Then thou shalt see, or rather to thy sorrow
Soon feel, whose God is strongest, thine or mine.

Har. Presume not on thy God. Whate'er he be,
Thee he regards not, owns not, hath cut off
Quite from his people, and delivered up
Into thy enemies' hand ; permitted them
To put out both thine eyes, and fettered send thee 1160
Into the common prison, there to grind
Among the slaves and asses, thy comrades,
As good for nothing else, no better service

With those thy boisterous locks ; no worthy match
For valour to assail, nor by the sword
Of noble warrior, so to stain his honour,
But by the barber's razor best subdued.

Sams. All these indignities, for such they are
From thine, these evils I deserve and more,
Acknowledge them from God inflicted on me 1170
Justly, yet despair not of his final pardon,
Whose ear is ever open, and his eye
Gracious to re-admit the suppliant ;
In confidence whereof I once again
Defy thee to the trial of mortal fight,
By combat to decide whose god is God,
Thine, or whom I with Israel's sons adore.

Har. Fair honour that thou dost thy God, in trusting
He will accept thee to defend his cause,
A murtherer, a revolter, and a robber ! 1180

Sams. Tongue-doughty giant, how dost thou prove
me these ?

Har. Is not thy nation subject to our lords ?
Their magistrates confessed it when they took thee
As a league-breaker, and delivered bound
Into our hands ; for hadst thou not committed
Notorious murder on those thirty men
At Ascalon, who never did thee harm,
Then, like a robber, stripp'dst them of their robes ?
The Philistines, when thou hadst broke the league,
Went up with armed powers thee only seeking, 1190
To others did no violence nor spoil.

Sams. Among the daughters of the Philistines
I chose a wife, which argued me no foe,
And in your city held my nuptial feast ;
But your ill-meaning politician lords,
Under pretence of bridal friends and guests,
Appointed to await me thirty spies,

Who, threatening cruel death, constrained the bride
To wring from me, and tell to them, my secret,
That solved the riddle which I had proposed. 1200
When I perceived all set on enmity,
As on my enemies, wherever chanced,
I used hostility, and took their spoil,
To pay my underminers in their coin.
My nation was subjected to your lords!
It was the force of conquest; force with force
Is well ejected when the conquered can.
But I, a private person, whom my country
As a league-breaker gave up bound, presumed
Single rebellion, and did hostile acts! 1210
I was no private, but a person raised,
With strength sufficient, and command from Heaven,
To free my country. If their servile minds
Me, their deliverer sent, would not receive,
But to their masters gave me up for nought,
The unworthier they; whence to this day they serve.
I was to do my part from Heaven assigned,
And had performed it if my known offence
Had not disabled me, not all your force.
These shifts refuted, answer thy appellant, 1220
Though by his blindness maimed for high attempts,
Who now defies thee thrice to single fight,
As a petty enterprise of small enforce.

Har. With thee, a man condemned, a slave enrolled,
Due by the law to capital punishment?
To fight with thee no man of arms will deign.

Sams. Can'st thou for this, vain boaster, to survey me,
To descant on my strength, and give thy verdict?
Come nearer; part not hence so slight informed,
But take good heed my hand survey not thee. 1230

Har. O Baal-zebub! can my ears unused
Hear these dishonours, and not render death?

Sams. No man withholds thee ; nothing from thy hand
Fear I incurable ; bring up thy van ;
My heels are fettered, but my fist is free.

Har. This insolence other kind of answer fits.

Sams. Go, baffled coward, lest I run upon thee,
Though in these chains, bulk without spirit vast,
And with one buffet lay thy structure low,
Or swing thee in the air, then dash thee down, 1240
To the hazard of thy brains and shattered sides.

Har. By Astaroth, ere long thou shalt lament
These braveries, in irons loaden on thee.

Chor. His giantship is gone somewhat crest-fallen,
Stalking with less unconscionable strides,
And lower looks, but in a sultry chafe.

Sams. I dread him not, nor all his giant brood,
Though fame divulge him father of five sons,
All of gigantic size, Goliath chief

Chor. He will directly to the lords, I fear, 1250
And with malicious counsel stir them up
Some way or other yet further to afflict thee.

Sams. He must allege some cause, and offered fight
Will not dare mention, lest a question rise
Whether he durst accept the offer or not ;
And that he durst not plain enough appeared.
Much more affliction than already felt
They cannot well impose, nor I sustain,
If they intend advantage of my labours,
The work of many hands, which earns my keeping, 1260
With no small profit daily to my owners.
But come what will ; my deadliest foe will prove
My speediest friend, by death to rid me hence ;
The worst that he can give, to me the best.
Yet so it may fall out, because their end
Is hate, not help to me, it may with mine
Draw their own ruin who attempt the deed.

Chor. O, how comely it is, and how reviving
To the spirits of just men long oppressed,
When God into the hands of their deliverer 1270
Puts invincible might,
To quell the mighty of the earth, the oppressor,
The brute and boisterous force of violent men,
Hardy and industrious to support
Tyrannic power, but raging to pursue
The righteous, and all such as honour truth !
He all their ammunition
And feats of war defeats,
With plain heroic magnitude of mind
And celestial vigour armed ; 1280
Their armouries and magazines contemns,
Renders them useless, while
With wingèd expedition
Swift as the lightning glance he executes
His errand on the wicked, who, surprised,
Lose their defence, distracted and amazed.

But patience is more oft the exercise
Of saints, the trial of their fortitude,
Making them each his own deliverer,
And victor over all 1290
That tyranny or fortune can inflict.
Either of these is in thy lot,
Samson, with might endued
Above the sons of men ; but sight bereaved
May chance to number thee with those
Whom patience finally must crown.

This Idol's day hath been to thee no day of rest,
Labouring thy mind
More than the working day thy hands.
And yet, perhaps, more trouble is behind ; 1300
For I descry this way
Some other tending ; in his hand

A sceptre or quaint staff he bears,
 Comes on amain, speed in his look.
 By his habit I discern him now
 A public officer, and now at hand.
 His message will be short and voluble

Off. Ebrews, the prisoner Samson here I seek.

Chor His manacles remark him ; there he sits.

Off. Samson, to thee our lords thus bid me say : 1310

This day to Dagon is a solemn feast,
 With sacrifices, triumph, pomp, and games ;
 Thy strength they know surpassing human rate,
 And now some public proof thereof require
 To honour this great feast, and great assembly.
 Rise, therefore, with all speed, and come along,
 Where I will see thee heartened and fresh clad,
 To appear as fits before the illustrious lords.

Sams. Thou know'st I am an Ebrew ; therefore tell
 them

Our law forbids at their religious rites 1320
 My presence ; for that cause I cannot come.

Off. This answer, be assured, will not content them.

Sams. Have they not sword-players, and every sort
 Of gymnastic artists, wrestlers, riders, runners,
 Jugglers and dancers, antics, mummers, mimics,
 But they must pick me out, with shackles tired,
 And over-laboured at their public mill,
 To make them sport with blind activity ?
 Do they not seek occasion of new quarrels,
 On my refusal, to distress me more, 1330
 Or make a game of my calamities ?
 Return the way thou cam'st ; I will not come.

Off. Regard thyself ; this will offend them highly.

Sams. Myself ! my conscience, and internal peace.
 Can they think me so broken, so debased
 With corporal servitude, that my mind ever

Will condescend to such absurd commands ?
 Although their drudge, to be their fool or jester,
 And, in my midst of sorrow and heart-grief,
 To show them feats, and play before their god— 1340
 The worst of all indignities, yet on me
 Joined with extreme contempt ! I will not come.

Off. My message was imposed on me with speed,
 Brooks no delay : is this thy resolution ?

Sams. So take it with what speed thy message needs

Off. I am sorry what this stoutness will produce.

Sams. Perhaps thou shalt have cause to sorrow indeed.

Chor. Consider, Samson ; matters now are strained
 Up to the highth, whether to hold or break.
 He's gone, and who knows how he may report 1350
 Thy words by adding fuel to the flame ?
 Expect another message, more imperious,
 More lordly thundering than thou well wilt bear.

Sams. Shall I abuse this consecrated gift
 Of strength, again returning with my hair
 After my great transgression—so requite
 Favour renewed, and add a greater sin
 By prostituting holy things to idols,
 A Nazarite, in place abominable,
 Vaunting my strength in honour to their Dagon ? 1360
 Besides how vile, contemptible, ridiculous,
 What act more execrably unclean, profane ?

Chor. Yet with this strength thou serv'st the Philistines,
 Idolatrous, uncircumcised, unclean.

Sams. Not in their idol-worship, but by labour
 Honest and lawful to deserve my food
 Of those who have me in their civil power.

Chor. Where the heart joins not, outward acts defile not.

Sams. Where outward force constrains, the sentence holds :
 But who constrains me to the temple of Dagon, 1370
 Not dragging ? The Philistian lords command :

Commands are no constraints. If I obey them,
I do it freely, venturing to displease
God for the fear of man, and man prefer,
Set God behind ; which, in his jealousy,
Shall never, unrepented, find forgiveness.
Yet that he may dispense with me, or thee,
Present in temples at idolatrous rites
For some important cause, thou need'st not doubt.

Chor. How thou wilt here come off surmounts my
reach.

1380

Sams. Be of good courage ; I begin to feel
Some rousing motions in me, which dispose
To something extraordinary my thoughts.
I with this messenger will go along—
Nothing to do, be sure, that may dishonour
Our Law, or stain my vow of Nazarite.
If there be aught of presage in the mind,
This day will be remarkable in my life
By some great act, or of my days the last.

Chor. In time thou hast resolved : the man returns. 1390

Off. Samson, this second message from our lords
To thee I am bid say : Art thou our slave,
Our captive, at the public mill our drudge,
And dar'st thou, at our sending and command,
Dispute thy coming ? come without delay ;
Or we shall find such engines to assail
And hamper thee, as thou shalt come of force,
Though thou wert firmler fastened than a rock.

Sams. I could be well content to try their art,
Which to no few of them would prove pernicious ; 1400
Yet, knowing their advantages too many,
Because they shall not trail me through their streets
Like a wild beast, I am content to go.
Masters' commands come with a power resistless
To such as owe them absolute subjection ;

And for a life who will not change his purpose
 (So mutable are all the ways of men ?)
 Yet this, be sure, in nothing to comply
 Scandalous or forbidden in our Law.

Off. I praise thy resolution. Doff these links . 1410
 By this compliance thou wilt win the lords
 To favour, and perhaps to set thee free.

Sams. Brethren, farewell. Your company along
 I will not wish, lest it perhaps offend them
 To see me girt with friends ; and how the sight
 Of me, as of a common enemy,
 So dreaded once, may now exasperate them
 I know not. Lords are lordliest in their wine ;
 And the well-feasted priest then soonest fired
 With zeal, if aught religion seem concerned ; 1420
 No less the people on their holy-days
 Impetuous, insolent, unquenchable.
 Happen what may, of me expect to hear
 Nothing dishonourable, impure, unworthy
 Our God, our Law, my nation, or myself ;
 The last of me or no I cannot warrant.

Chor. Go, and the Holy One
 Of Israel be thy guide
 To what may serve his glory best, and spread his name
 Great among the Heathen round ; 1430
 Send thee the Angel of thy birth, to stand
 Fast by thy side, who from thy father's field
 Rode up in flames after his message told
 Of thy conception, and be now a shield
 Of fire ; that Spirit that first rushed on thee
 In the camp of Dan
 Be efficacious in thee now at need !
 For never was from Heaven imparted
 Measure of strength so great to mortal seed
 As in thy wondrous actions hath been seen. 1440

But wherefore comes old Manoa in such haste
With youthful steps ? Much livelier than erewhile
He seems : supposing here to find his son,
Or of him bringing to us some glad news ?

Man. Peace with you, brethren ! My inducement hither
Was not at present here to find my son,
By order of the lords new parted hence
To come and play before them at their feast.
I heard all as I came ; the city rings,
And numbers thither flock : I had no will, 1450
Lest I should see him forced to things unseemly.
But that which moved my coming now was chiefly
To give ye part with me what hope I have
With good success to work his liberty.

Chor. That hope would much rejoice us to partake
With thee. Say, reverend sire ; we thirst to hear.

Man I have attempted, one by one, the lords,
Either at home, or through the high street passing,
With supplication prone and father's tears,
To accept of ransom for my son, their prisoner. 1460
Some much averse I found, and wondrous harsh,
Contemptuous, proud, set on revenge and spite ;
That part most revered Dagon and his priests :
Others more moderate seeming, but their aim
Private reward, for which both God and State
They easily would set to sale : a third
More generous far and civil, who confessed
They had enough revenged, having reduced
Their foe to misery beneath their fears ;
The rest was magnanimity to remit, 1470
If some convenient ransom were proposed.

What noise or shout was that ? It tore the sky.

Chor. Doubtless the people shouting to behold
Their once great dread, captive and blind before them,
Or at some proof of strength before them shown.

Man. His ransom, if my whole inheritance
May compass it, shall willingly be paid
And numbered down. Much rather I shall choose
To live the poorest in my tribe, than richest
And he in that calamitous prison left. 1480
No, I am fixed not to part hence without him
For his redemption all my patrimony,
If need be, I am ready to forgo
And quit. Not wanting him, I shall want nothing.

Chor. Fathers are wont to lay up for their sons ;
Thou for thy son art bent to lay out all :
Sons wont to nurse their parents in old age ;
Thou in old age car'st how to nurse thy son,
Made older than thy age through eye-sight lost.

Man. It shall be my delight to tend his eyes, 1490
And view him sitting in his house, ennobled
With all those high exploits by him achieved,
And on his shoulders waving down those locks
That of a nation armed the strength contained.
And I persuade me God hath not permitted
His strength again to grow up with his hair
Garrisoned round about him like a camp
Of faithful soldiery, were not his purpose
To use him further yet in some great service—
Not to sit idle with so great a gift 1500
Useless, and thence ridiculous, about him.
And, since his strength with eye-sight was not lost,
God will restore him eye-sight to his strength.

Chor. Thy hopes are not ill founded, nor seem vain,
Of his delivery, and thy joy thereon
Conceived, agreeable to a father's love ;
In both which we, as next, participate.

Man. I know your friendly minds, and . . . O, what noise!
Mercy of Heaven ! what hideous noise was that ?
Horribly loud, unlike the former shout. 1510

Chor. Noise call you it, or universal groan,
As if the whole inhabitation perished ?
Blood, death, and deathful deeds, are in that noise,
Ruin, destruction at the utmost point.

Man. Of ruin indeed methought I heard the noise.
Oh ! it continues ; they have slain my son.

Chor. Thy son is rather slaying them : that outcry
From slaughter of one foe could not ascend.

Man. Some dismal accident it needs must be.
What shall we do—stay here, or run and see ? 1520

Chor. Best keep together here, lest, running thither,
We unawares run into danger's mouth.
This evil on the Philistines is fallen :
From whom could else a general cry be heard ?
The sufferers, then, will scarce molest us here ;
From other hands we need not much to fear.
What if, his eye-sight (for to Israel's God
Nothing is hard) by miracle restored,
He now be dealing dole among his foes,
And over heaps of slaughtered walk his way ? 1530

Man. That were a joy presumptuous to be thought.

Chor. Yet God hath wrought things as incredible
For his people of old ; what hinders now ?

Man. He can, I know, but doubt to think he will ;
Yet hope would fain subscribe, and tempts belief.
A little stay will bring some notice hither.

Chor. Of good or bad so great, of bad the sooner ;
For evil news rides post, while good news baits.
And to our wish I see one hither speeding—
An Hebrew, as I guess, and of our tribe. 1540

Messenger. O, whither shall I run, or which way fly
The sight of this so horrid spectacle,
Which erst my eyes beheld, and yet behold ?
For dire imagination still pursues me.
But providence or instinct of nature seems,

Or reason, though disturbed and scarce consulted,
 To have guided me aright, I know not how,
 To thee first, reverend Manoa, and to these
 My countrymen, whom here I knew remaining,
 As at some distance from the place of horror, 1550
 So in the sad event too much concerned.

Man. The accident was loud, and here before thee
 With rueful cry ; yet what it was we hear not.
 No preface needs ; thou sceest we long to know.

Mess. It would burst forth ; but I recover breath,
 And sense distract, to know well what I utter

Man Tell us the sum ; the circumstance defer

Mess. Gaza yet stands ; but all her sons are fallen,
 All in a moment overwhelmed and fallen.

Man. Sad ! but thou know'st to Israelites not saddest
 The desolation of a hostile city. 1561

Mess. Feed on that first ; there may in grief be surfeit.

Man. Relate by whom.

Mess. By Samson.

Man. That still lessens
 The sorrow, and converts it nigh to joy.

Mess. Ah ! Manoa, I refrain too suddenly
 To utter what will come at last too soon,
 Lest evil tidings, with too rude irruption
 Hitting thy aged ear, should pierce too deep.

Man. Suspense in news is torture ; speak them out

Mess. Then take the worst in brief : Samson is
 dead. 1570

Man. The worst indeed ! Oh, all my hopes defeated
 To free him hence ! but Death, who sets all free,
 Hath paid his ransom now and full discharge.
 What windy joy this day had I conceived,
 I hopeful of his delivery, which now proves
 Abortive as the first-born bloom of spring
 Nipt with the lagging rear of winter's frost !

Yet, ere I give the reins to grief, say first
How died he ; death to life is crown or shame.
All by him fell, thou say'st ; by whom fell he ? 1580
What glorious hand gave Samson his death's wound ?

Mess. Unwounded of his enemies he fell.

Man. Wearied with slaughter, then, or how ? explain.

Mess. By his own hands.

Man. Self-violence ? What cause
Brought him so soon at variance with himself
Among his foes ?

Mess. Inevitable cause—

At once both to destroy and be destroyed.
The edifice, where all were met to see him,
Upon their heads and on his own he pulled.

Man. O lastly over-strong against thyself ! 1590
A dreadful way thou took'st to thy revenge.
More than enough we know ; but, while things yet
Are in confusion, give us, if thou canst,
Eye-witness of what first or last was done,
Relation more particular and distinct.

Mess. Occasions drew me early to this city ;
And, as the gates I entered with sun-rise,
The morning trumpets festival proclaimed
Through each high street. Little I had dispatched,
When all abroad was rumoured that this day 1600
Samson should be brought forth, to show the people
Proof of his mighty strength in feats and games.
I sorrowed at his captive state, but minded
Not to be absent at that spectacle.
The building was a spacious theatre,
Half round on two main pillars vaulted high,
With seats where all the lords, and each degree
Of sort, might sit in order to behold ;
The other side was open, where the throng
On banks and scaffolds under sky might stand : 1610

I among these aloof obscurely stood.
The feast and noon grew high, and sacrifice
Had filled their hearts with mirth, high cheer, and wine,
When to their sports they turned. Immediately
Was Samson as a public servant brought,
In their state livery clad : before him pipes
And timbrels ; on each side went armed guards,
Both horse and foot ; before him and behind
Archers and slingers, cataphracts, and spears.
At sight of him the people with a shout 1620
Rifted the air, clamouring their god with praise,
Who had made their dreadful enemy their thrall.
He patient, but undaunted, where they led him,
Came to the place ; and what was set before him,
Which without help of eye might be assayed,
To heave, pull, draw, or break, he still performed
All with incredible, stupendious force,
None daring to appear antagonist.
At length, for intermission sake, they led him
Between the pillars ; he his guide requested 1630
(For so from such as nearer stood we heard),
As over-tired, to let him lean a while
With both his arms on those two massy pillars,
That to the archèd roof gave main support.
He unsuspecting led him ; which when Samson
Felt in his arms, with head a while inclined,
And eyes fast fixed, he stood, as one who prayed,
Or some great matter in his mind revolved :
At last, with head erect, thus cried aloud :—
“ Hitherto, Lords, what your commands imposed 1640
I have performed, as reason was, obeying,
Not without wonder or delight beheld ;
Now, of my own accord, such other trial
I mean to show you of my strength yet greater
As with amaze shall strike all who behold.”

This uttered, straining all his nerves, he bowed ;
As with the force of winds and waters pent
When mountains tremble, those two massy pillars
With horrible convulsion to and fro
He tugged, he shook, till down they came, and drew 1650
The whole roof after them with burst of thunder
Upon the heads of all who sat beneath,
Lords, ladies, captains, counsellors, or priests,
Their choice nobility and flower, not only
Of this, but each Philistian city round,
Met from all parts to solemnise this feast.
Samson, with these immixed, inevitably
Pulled down the same destruction on himself ;
The vulgar only scaped, who stood without.

Chor. O dearly bought revenge, yet glorious ! 1660
Living or dying thou hast fulfilled
The work for which thou wast foretold
To Israel, and now liest victorious
Among thy slain self-killed ;
Not willingly, but tangled in the fold
Of dire Necessity, whose law in death conjoined
Thee with thy slaughtered foes, in number more
Than all thy life had slain before.

Semichor. While their hearts were jocund and sublime,
Drunk with idolatry, drunk with wine, 1670
And fat regorged of bulls and goats,
Chaunting their idol, and preferring
Before our living Dread, who dwells
In Silo, his bright sanctuary,
Among them he a spirit of phrenzy sent,
Who hurt their minds,
And urged them on with mad desire
To call in haste for their destroyer.
They, only set on sport and play,
Unweetingly importuned 1680

Their own destruction to come speedy upon them.
 So fond are mortal men,
 Fallen into wrath divine,
 As their own ruin on themselves to invite,
 Insensate left, or to sense reprobate,
 And with blindness internal struck.

Semichor. But he, though blind of sight,
 Despised, and thought extinguished quite,
 With inward eyes illuminated,
 His fiery virtue roused 1690
 From under ashes into sudden flame,
 And as an evening dragon came,
 Assailant on the perch'd roosts
 And nests in order ranged
 Of tame villatic fowl, but as an eagle
 His cloudless thunder bolted on their heads.
 So Virtue, given for lost,
 Depressed and overthrown, as seemed,
 Like that self-begotten bird
 In the Arabian woods embost, 1700
 That no second knows nor third,
 And lay crewhile a holocaust,
 From out her ashy womb now teemed,
 Revives, reflourishes, then vigorous most
 When most unactive deemed ;
 And, though her body die, her fame survives,
 A secular bird, ages of lives.

Man. Come, come ; no time for lamentation now,
 Nor much more cause. Samson hath quit himself
 Like Samson, and heroically hath finished 1710
 A life heroic, on his enemies
 Fully revenged—hath left them years of mourning,
 And lamentation to the sons of Caphtor
 Through all Philistian bounds ; to Israel
 Honour hath left and freedom, let but them

Find courage to lay hold on this occasion ;
To himself and father's house eternal fame ,
And, which is best and happiest yet, all this
With God not parted from him, as was feared,
But favouring and assisting to the end. 1720
Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
Or knock the breast ; no weakness, no contempt,
Dispraise, or blame ; nothing but well and fair,
And what may quiet us in a death so noble.
Let us go find the body where it lies
Soaked in his enemies' blood, and from the stream
With lavers pure and cleansing herbs wash off
The clotted gore. I, with what speed the while
(Gaza is not in plight to say us nay),
Will send for all my kindred, all my friends, 1730
To fetch him hence, and solemnly attend,
With silent obsequy and funeral train,
Home to his father's house. There will I build him
A monument, and plant it round with shade
Of laurel ever green and branching palm,
With all his trophies hung, and acts enrolled
In copious legend, or sweet lyric song.
Thither shall all the valiant youth resort,
And from his memory inflame their breasts
To matchless valour and adventures high ; 1740
The virgins also shall, on feastful days,
Visit his tomb with flowers, only bewailing
His lot unfortunate in nuptial choice,
From whence captivity and loss of eyes.

Chor. All is best, though we oft doubt,
What the unsearchable dispose
Of Highest Wisdom brings about,
And ever best found in the close.
Oft He seems to hide his face,
But unexpectedly returns,

1750

And to his faithful champion hath in place
Bore witness gloriously ; whence Gaza mourns,
And all that band them to resist
His uncontrollable intent.
His servants He, with new acquist
Of true experience from this great event,
With peace and consolation hath dismissed,
And calm of mind, all passion spent.

END OF VOL. II.